

THE *11: 2. e.*  
REASONABLENESS  
OF  
CONFORMITY  
TO THE  
CHURCH of ENGLAND,  
Represented to the  
DISSENTING MINISTERS.

In Answer to the *Tenth Chapter* of  
Mr. Calamy's *Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's History of his Life and Times.*

PART I.

By BENJAMIN HOADLY, M. A.

The Second Edition Corrected.

All this began but in *Unwarrantable Separations*, and too much aggravating the *Faults of the Churches, and Common People, and Common-Prayer Book, and Ministry.* Mr. Baxter in his Account of the *Sectaries*, *Abridg. p. 96.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for Tim. Childs, at the *White Hart* at the  
West-End of *St. Paul's Church-Yard*, 1703.





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THE  
PREFACE.

WHEN I first read the Tenth Chapter of Mr. Calamy's Abridgment of the History of Mr. Baxter's Life, and Times, I confess I was not a little concerned to find such accusations brought against Conformity to the Church of England, and especially Ministerial Conformity. This concern led me seriously and impartially to examine whatever I found there alleged; which, I thought was a duty I owed to my self, and my own private peace and satisfaction. And as We are naturall apt to think that

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*what appears very satisfactory to our selves, may possibly bring satisfaction to the minds of others ; so I was willing to hope (but not upon my own judgment only) that a fair representation of those arguments, which seemed so convincing to my self in this cause, might prove useful to some others ; and help to remove their prejudices, and recommend Conformity to them. With this view I first drew up these papers in this form ; and now publish part of them to the VVorld for these two ends.*

*First, To vindicate the Conforming Clergy, by vindicating the Terms of their Conformity to the Church of England from all false representations, and objections that have no just foundation. VVe who seriously conform as Ministers to this Church cannot be willing to be accounted what no Christian ought to be ; and cannot be*

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be content to sit down, and suffer our practice to be represented as a complication of the blackest and most unpardonable crimes. We owe something to our own reputation as we are Men; and more as we are Ministers: as the success of that great charge We have undertaken depends very much upon it; and as the blemishes that are cast upon it, reflect a dishonour upon Religion it self. If those accusations which Mr. Calamy hath brought against Ministerial Conformity be received as built upon good reasons, the consequence will be, that We must be accounted guilty of as many and great crimes as it is well possible for any men to be guilty of. I do not say that it was this Author's design in reviving these heads of Nonconformity, to lessen the reputation, or blacken the character of any of his Neighbours: for I have too good an



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opinion of him to think him capable of such a design. But I say, that considering the manner in which they are represented to his Readers, and the insinuations often drop'd in their way, it is too probable that multitudes will embrace them as Truth, and be led by them to judge Ministerial Conformity a sin of a very high nature : which indeed it must be, if these representations be reasonable. It cannot therefore be thought an unbecoming attempt, to endeavour to convince the world that they are not reasonable ; that so the reputation of a whole society of Men may not suffer unjustly in the tenderest point : I mean their Honesty and Integrity.

Secondly, What I farther propose by the publication of these Papers is, To satisfy those who still continue to dissent from us. I mean such of them as Mr. Calamy, and those whose  
cause

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*cause he pleads in a peculiar manner : whose separation, tho' not accompanied with such violence and heat, yet carries along with it more of mystery, and is more unaccountable than the separation of those who are at a greater distance from us. But how unaccountable soever it appear, it cannot but become us to do all we can for their satisfaction. For if we think they are very much to blame in continuing their separation, We cannot but heartily wish they would unite with us. And if we heartily wish this, We shall not insult or triumph over them, but endeavour to convince them ; to remove what we judge to be prejudices, and to set things in a due light before their eyes. This is what I have attempted : and there is somewhat both in the principles and practice of these persons, which suffers me not to think it altogether an hopeless attempt.*



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*what advances towards peace can we make, while we are producing what must incense us against one another? One would think it were time now to suffer the passions of Men to cool, and to address only to their reason and judgment.*

*And it is to the Reason and Judgment of Men I here appeal, regarding nothing in Mr. Calamy's Book but the Tenth Chapter, and nothing in that but what refers to the state of the Case as it is at this time, in which only we are concern'd; nothing but what he himself, at the end of the Ninth Chapter, calls the Stable Principles upon which Nonconformity is still bottomed. I may have occasion in the other part of this Reply, to take a little farther notice of some other parts of Mr. Calamy's Book: but only so far as they are likely to disturb the minds of his Readers, and prejudice them against the Church of England. But I have no design of lessening the satisfaction any persons may have in those good characters so freely bestow'd on one side; or those bad characters, and little insinuations cast upon the other. Let Mr. Baxter be what he pleases, and other Men who opposed him, what he thinks fit to make them. Let the ejected*

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ejected Ministers in 1662 be, in all Ministerial abilities, much above the several hundreds which Mr. Calamy tells us had been ejected before by the Parliament. I see not how this concerns the Question which is only this, Whether separation from the established Church be necessary. And since this is the only point between us of any great concern, it ought to be managed with the most artless simplicity; and not cumber'd with what is apt to hinder a great part of the world from judging aright in it. I believe I could produce a Catalogue of above two thousand, excellent in Learning and Piety, who thought it not unlawful to comply with the Terms of Ministerial Conformity: and none of them either wild Enthusiasts, or Ignorant Mechanics. And I could offer some reasons why this ought to be accounted a better argument for Conformity, than the Catalogue of ejected Ministers is against it. But indeed this would serve for nothing but to amuse the Reader, and divert his mind from the main Question. I am certain I have here endeavoured to avoid whatever may do so; and therefore I can safely say that I write not to perpetuate the dispute; but to bring



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bring it to a good issue, if possible, by offering what may tend to the satisfaction of those, in whose power it is to put a considerable stop to it.

Throughout the whole I have strictly obliged my self to say nothing but what appeared to me truly fitted to the purpose for which I produce it. And in all that I have alleged I have had only a regard to what appeared reasonable, and true, and apt to satisfy any person concerned. If it be so, I am not at all solicitous about any thing farther. I desire it should stand or fall as it agrees or disagrees with Reason, and the Gospel: and accordingly, I shall be very free to defend it, or very ready to retract it. If in some instances I seem to some not rigid enough, and to others too rigid; I desire it may be remembred, that my business was to consider the Terms of Conformity as they are in themselves, not as this or that person desires they should be. I have endeavoured to defend them as they are, but I have not dared to alter them upon my own authority, either in order to make them appear more odious, or more agreeable to the Dissenters. I could never permit my self to have any part in setting them at a great-

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er distance from the Church: and, on the other hand, I should judge it but an odd, and very unlikely way to win upon them, to represent the Terms of Conformity more according to their wishes, unless I could persuade them to believe that they were truly what I represent them to be.

What Errours there are in the style (for that there may be some, I am sensible) I hope are small; such as will not disturb the sense, or hide the force of the argument; and therefore pardonable.

The following Postscript is added, in answer to that in Mr. Calamy, and to show the world how easy it is to write such Advertisements. Indeed I have altered the state of the Question at the beginning of it; because it is very evident from every Book published in the Cause, that the Controversy between the Conformists and the Dissenters is not, Whether the established Church be perfect; but, Whether separation from it be necessary or reasonable.

I have nothing more to add, but my request to the Reader, that He would bring an honest heart along with him; and my prayers to God, that he would give a blessing

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*sing to what I have here proposed, as far as it is fitted to the promoting his glory, and the increasing peace and unity amongst Christians.*

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## POSTSCRIPT.

**T**Here being some who may be willing to search into the bottom of that unhappy Controversy that hath been depending almost ever since the Reformation; between the Assertors of the Unreasonableness of Separation from the Establish'd Church, and those who have acted upon the Opposite principle, and pleaded a necessity of Separation from it: I have been desired in order to their satisfaction, to point out those Writings of the Former which may be judg'd to contain the strength of their Cause. In compliance with which desire, I recommend the following writings to the perusal of the Curious.

Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity.

John Ball's Friendly Tryal of the Grounds of Separation.

Bradshaw's Unreasonableness of Separation. 1640.

Rathband's Grave and Modest Confutation of the Brownists. 1644.

A Letter of many Ministers in Old-England to others in New-England. 1637.

Brinsley's Arraignment of Schism. 1646.

Separation Self-condemn'd in answer to Mr. Jenkins. Rob.

Rob. Grovij Responsio ad Celeusma.

Dr. Stillingfleet's Sermon of the Mischief of Separation.

Dr. Stillingfleet's Unreasonableness of Separation.

Dr. Sherlock's Defence of it.

Dr. Claget's Answer to the Mischief of Impositions.

Dr. Falkner's Libertas Ecclesiastica.

A Collection of Cases, and other Discourses, Written to recover Dissenters to the Communion of the Church of England, by some Divines of the City of London. In Folio.

Mr. Bennet's Abridgment of these Cases.

——— Discourse of Schism.

I need not add any more. He that will be at the pains to peruse these, will find that the Assertors of the Unreasonableness of Separation have much to say for their Cause; and little reason to be troublesome to the World, by repeating their arguments as often as such as love Contention think fit to renew the Pleas for Separation, that have been so often urged already, and as often answered.

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A Serious Admonition to Mr. *Calamy*, occasioned by the First Part of his Defence of Moderate Nonconformity. By *Benj. Hoadly*, M. A. Printed for *Tim. Childe*, at the *White Hart* in *St. Paul's Church-yard*.

THE



**THE  
REASONABLENESS  
OF  
CONFORMITY  
TO THE  
CHURCH of ENGLAND,**

Represented to the  
**DISSENTING MINISTERS, &c.**

**T**HE Design of the following  
Papers is so justifiable, how  
mean soever they be in them-  
selves, that I need not use ma-  
ny Words to engage you to receive them  
with all *Candour* and *Goodness*. I am  
one, who sincerely desire a greater Uni-  
on amongst *English Protestants* than we

B

are

## *The Reasonableness*

are yet arrived at : And tho' the method in which I now propose to do somewhat towards this, be perhaps not the most agreeable to your Wishes ; Yet, it must be acceptable to you, as You profess your selves willing to attend to any offers that are made this way, and ready to *conform*, if your *Objections* can be fairly removed.

Now the *Reasons*, on which your whole Cause is built, I find collected by Mr. Calamy in his *tenth Chapter of the Life of Mr. Baxter* : And they are thought to be there represented with the utmost force, and after the most convincing manner possible. The best method therefore I can think of to pursue my Design in, will be this :

I. To answer the *Objections* there advanced against the *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* in our Church.

II. To shew, that the Arguments there proposed, in defence of your Selves, are not sufficient to justify your *Separation*, even supposing these *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* to be unreasonable.

III. To

III. To Consider what is there offer'd for the Vindication of the *Dissenting Laity*.

Only I desire it may be remembred that I confine my self to the present Times ; and speak to those of You who continue to separate from the Church, for the *Reasons* there represented.

I. I shall consider those *Terms* of *Ministerial Conformity*, which are there represented as *Unreasonable*.

Now, of the *five Terms* there produced, there are but three which are at present the *Terms* of *Ministerial Conformity* in the Church of England : And they are these.

I. They that will minister in our Church must be ordain'd by *Bishops*.

II. They must declare their *unfeigned Assent, and Consent*, to all and every thing contain'd, and prescrib'd, in, and by, the *Book of Common-Prayer, and administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England: together with the Psalter; and the Form and manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating of*  
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*Bishops,*



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*Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.* They must likewise make an equivalent *Subscription*.

III. They must take the Oath of *Canonical Obedience*, and Swear Subjection to their *Ordinary* according to the *Canons* of the Church.

I. They that will *Minister* in this Church must be ordain'd by *Bishops*. The *Church of England* is indeed an *Episcopal Church*. We think we can demonstrate that in the Primitive times the administration of Ecclesiastical Affairs was in the Hands of *Bishops*, who had *Presbyters* subject to them; that as the *Apostles* maintain'd a superiority over the *Presbyters* of the Churches they constituted, so upon occasion of their absence, they settled others in this *Superiority*; that as these thus succeeding the *Apostles* had the power of *Ordination* committed to them, so their *Successors* in the following Ages claim'd this Power as their Right, and look'd upon *Ordination* to be their *Office* in the regular Course of Things. No wonder then that we require all that come into the *Ministry*, to come in at this Door, which we think open'd for that purpose by the *Apostles*. Nor do I find that any of the Objections You here  
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urge against this do signify, that *Ordination* in the regular course of Things, ought to be administred without *Bishops*. But all that is objected is a difficulty arising from your having been before ordain'd without *Bishops*, which *Ordination* you cannot renounce, as you must do, in effect, if you submit to *Episcopal Ordination*. Taking it, therefore, for granted because I find nothing alleg'd against it, that regularly *Ordination* is not to be administred without the *Bishop*, I shall

1. Give an account why this is insisted on.

2. Answer your scruples against complying with it, as I find them express'd by Mr. *Calamy*. Premising only this, that since most of You came into the Ministry since the restoration of *Episcopacy*, and therefore have brought this difficulty voluntarily upon your selves, refusing wittingly and considerately either to conform as *Lay-men*, or to be ordain'd by *Bishops*, it seems a wonder to us that you should not be more willing to submit in this Point, and to make some recompence for this notorious neglect put upon the *Episcopal Office*, than to search out Objections against it. Much more do we

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find reason to wonder, that instead of recommending *Lay-Conformity* to such whose Consciences could heartily approve of it, and an Education in another way, you still continue to advise, prepare, and ordain others to the Ministry ; by that means laying what you account an insuperable difficulty, which would otherwise be wanting, in the way towards such an Union as you say you desire. Pardon us, if we cannot think, that this practice is agreeable to that desire of Peace and Concord you express, which seems to us as if You rather desir'd to prevent it, unless it could be brought about wholly in your own way. But I return

1. To give some account why this *Re-ordination* is insisted upon, and propose some reasons why it may be submitted to. Now the reasonableness of insisting upon this appears from this one proposition, the truth of which to us is plain, acknowledg'd by Mr. Baxter, and not in the least call'd in question in any of your reasonings on this Head, viz. *That Episcopal Ordination is the regular orderly Ordination settled in the Church of Christ.* This being so, as Mr. Baxter judges (in his *disputation with Mr. Johnson*) that the end why

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See the *Abridgment*  
of Mr.  
Baxter's  
*Life*, p.  
129.



*we are obliged to seek Ordination rather from an Ecclesiastical Officer than from a Magistrate, &c. is, because God hath appointed him for order sake, and to prevent Intrusions and Abuses; so we argue, that the Reason why we are obliged to seek Ordination from a Bishop, rather than from Presbyters without a Bishop, is because God hath appointed Him for order sake, and to prevent Intrusions and Abuses; And because the going out of this settled way, tho' it be into another which possibly might prevent Intrusions and Abuses as well, were it the settled way, gives too much encouragement and too much room for Intrusions and Abuses. As we think with Mr. Baxter that Necessity only can answer for the irregularity of Ordination; so we think that where there is no necessity, or when this necessity ceases, God gives no encouragement to such deviations, and a Regular Ordination is to be sought for. That, therefore, it is not the solemnity of the work, the care taken, the fitness of the Person, the fasting and Prayer, that can excuse the neglect of this, or be accounted sufficient without this: because this is the method deliver'd down to us from the Apostles times, and the departing from this tends*

Ibid.

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Ibid.

to the overthrow of all Order : nor can we suppose that Almighty God supplies the want of it, when no necessity can be pleaded, because *He is the God of Order, and not of Confusion.* We judge with Mr. Baxter, that *Persons (let them be never so well qualified) are to seek an orderly admission, and make others the Judges of their qualifications :* And imagining our method to be the orderly and settled method from the Primitive Ages, where we see it neglected, when there is no necessity, we think in Justice, we cannot acknowledge those who depart from it approved of God in setting apart themselves for the Ministry. We dare not think that He allows so great a neglect cast upon the Order settled in his Church ; and we dare not in our Consciences give any encouragement to a method which has disunited a whole Nation from their *Bishops* ; and such an encouragement as would be in effect, an acknowledgment that God approves of *Irregular Ordinations* upon no necessity, and would tend to introduce still more and more *Irregular Ordinations*, when ever any necessity should be pretended. This we dare not do, and taking this to be your Case, that you have neglected

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neglected the way settled in the Church; and, when no necessity urged, put your selves into the Ministry in another manner, we cannot think it hard, that you should receive *Orders* in a *regular way*. This will indeed be an acknowledgment that you have been in an error: but surely this consideration will not weigh more with good Men than the Universal good, and the service you may do by giving so publick a testimony to *Order*, and *Institution*, and so great a stop to *irregularity* and *confusion*. Upon the whole, We think that, according to Mr. *Baxter*, We may insist upon this; nay, and ought, as long as we are an *Episcopal Church*. For it was his opinion (as is plain from the occasion of that Paper I have now refer'd to) that nothing but necessity can excuse those who neglect *Episcopal Ordination*; and that their *Irregular Ordination*, when there is no necessity for it, is not approv'd by God. I confess this argument supposes You to have no *necessity* laid upon you, which I shall now say somewhat to. - You know it is an easy thing to plead *necessity*, and there is no end of *Irregularities*, if any *Necessity* be admitted but what is most apparent: for it is then only



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only that God can be said plainly to require Men to go out of the Common way, or to approve their *Irregular Proceedings*. And if you can prove that any such Necessity was laid upon You to have recourse to irregular ways, I promise, for my part, to believe that God approv'd your ordination, and does approve it as long as that necessity lasts. If You cannot, We cannot believe it, and are in conscience bound not to prevaricate, and cast the greatest reflexion imaginable upon *regular Ordination*.

Let us now, therefore, consider whether *there be such an undeniable necessity for your help; whether the safety of the Church be at Stake, and the Salvation of Men's Souls; or whether there be any other reason sufficient to justify your irregular Proceeding*. And give me leave upon this to ask You these following Questions.

Are the *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* so unreasonable in the Church of *England*, that very many Conscientious, Useful, Judicious, Pious, Excellent, Laborious Men have not conform'd, and do not daily conform as Ministers? Mr. *Baxter* acknowledg'd, and all must acknowledge, there are, and have been many such Men.

Are

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II

Are there any means necessary to the Peoples Salvation wanting in the *Church of England*? Is there not a pious and useful *Liturgy* to assist their publick Devotions? Are there not Chapters out of Gods Word ev'ry day read to them? Is not the whole Will of God declared to them? Is there any thing in the administration of the Sacraments, contrary to the main design of the Gospel, or destructive of Salvation?

Is there any one thing, plainly declared to be the duty of a Minister in the Gospel, and such a Duty as is necessary either to the preservation of the Church, or the Salvation of Mankind, that a Minister in the *Church of England* cannot legally do? Cannot He exhort, reprove, be instant, instruct, admonish in private and in publick, and refuse the Holy Communion to any scandalous Christians?

If there be any thing else You imagine convenient, which He cannot do, Is it so necessary, that the State of Christianity, and the Salvation of the People depend upon it; so necessary, that you are obliged to be ordain'd after an *irregular* manner to make your selves capable of performing it?

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Or, Is this the reason you put your selves into the Ministry, because there are very few in the Church of *England* that take any care of Souls; and that there is great occasion for your help? If it be, why do ye officiate where there is no such occasion for you; where no want of the means of Salvation can be pretended? Or, if you say there is need ev'ry where of all that will labour in the Ministry, Consider whether this will not be a plea for the most unqualified in the world; and give occasion, whether You will or no, to the greatest *irregularities* imaginable: for where can we stop in *irregularities*, if we justify those for which there is no absolute necessity?

Supposing the Terms of *Episcopal Ordination* unreasonable, Can the good you propose to do in an *irregular* way, countervail the mischief of such *irregularities*; taking into the account, on one side, the good you could do in your private Capacities, if you remain'd *Lay-men*; and, on the other side, the dividing Principles, the Heats, the Uncharitableness, the Indecencies you encourage, and propagate, whether you design it or no?

Or,



Or, Must you be ordain'd to the *Ministry* for the benefit of those amongst the People who cannot submit to the administration of the Sacraments according to the Use of the *Church of England*? And are you forc'd to this irregular way, on this account? If this were truly the reason, you would certainly press *conformity* upon those who can submit to it; You would receive and encourage no such; you would help in the removal of those prejudices and groundless scruples, and teach them how to tolerate what they cannot amend; and, agreeably to this, you would receive none but such as had invincible objections against *Communion* with our *Church*: but not seeing a Practice correspondent to this plea, we cannot think this to be the true Reason. But if it be, we desire you to consider, whether you do not by this give too much countenance to a contempt of all Ecclesiastical Authority; whether do you not give too much encouragement to those who separate from us with the rankest uncharitableness; and receive and cherish those who rail at our whole worship as *Idolatrous, Antichristian, Popish, and intolerable*; or, whether it be fit, that they who  
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think such Prejudices groundless, should be so fond of adding life and continuance to them, as, rather than not do it, to transgress the order settled in the Church.

The Question is, what necessity is there for your Ordination in the Ministry? and when you have thought of this *necessity*, see if the same *necessity* may not be pleaded for farther irregularities; see if it might not have been pleaded in all ages of the Church; and consider whether such *unwarrantable Ordinations* do not tend to the contempt of all *Institutions* and *Ordinances*, as we judge they do.

These *Questions*, and such like, considered, and answer'd with all the seriousness the subject requires, if they do not satisfy you, yet they will serve to give you some account why we insist upon *Episcopal Ordination*, and dare not give so open an encouragement to *Irregularity* as you seem to expect.

*Episcopal Ordination* (says Mr. Baxter) is to be sought for; and where there is not an absolute necessity God does not approve of *irregular Ordinations*:

You have not a necessity (as we judge) so absolute and so apparent, as will justify  
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that neglect you have put upon the settled Order of the Church, and the irregular method you have taken;

Therefore, we dare not act as if we thought God had approv'd your *Ordination*, till you shew us this manifest and undeniable necessity; and so dare not acknowledge you Ministers without *Episcopal Ordination*.

And we judge it very hard, that *this* should be number'd amongst the unreasonable *terms* of *Ministerial Conformity*; when we think the whole point is, whether the other *terms* be unreasonable, and sufficient to justify a separation, or no. For, if they be, and it can be prov'd; this will prove such a necessity as will justify *Irregular Ordinations*, and demonstrate that God approv'd your *Ordination*: But if they be not, then no such necessity was laid upon you; and it cannot be prov'd that God approv'd your *Ordination*, or that it is hard for you to submit to a *regular Ordination*.

And we desire you to consider, whether, whilst you argue against this under the general name of *Dissenters*, you do not argue for many Ignorant Mechanics, who cannot properly be said to have had any

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ordination but a pretended inward Call ; and for a great number of men, of whom Mr. Baxter complain'd long ago *that they made too light of Ordination.*

One thing more I am led to say upon this Subject, and that is, supposing there was a necessity of seeking *Irregular Ordinations*, such a necessity as arose only from the badness of the times, *when Bishops were put down in England*, which we are allowed by Mr. Calamy to think was the case of the *ejected Ministers* : yet this necessity could justify the *Ordination* no longer than it lasted ; and when they were restor'd, the *Ordination* was null, and another to be sought for in a *regular way*. This I say, supposing this truly the case, and the *irregular* practice grounded only upon this reason : and this Mr. Baxter leads me to, by the parallel instances He produces in his Paper about *regular Ordinations*. They are these, *In an assault of an Enemy, and the absence of a Commander, an experienc'd Soldier who has no commission may supply the place of a Commander.* The necessity answers for the *irregularity*, while the necessity lasts. But would He be acknowledg'd a Commander, if, when there is no necessity, He should

P. 131.

should still pretend to that office without another Commission in a regular way?

*Necessity gives a man a License to practise Physick, in an extraordinary case*, and when He can have no License in a regular way. Has He therefore a License to practise when this necessity is gone, or does that License which necessity gives last any longer than the necessity it self?

At a time when it is impossible to procure a Commission from the King, suppose any Person, upon the manifest danger of that Kingdom, should take upon Him to be *Lord Deputy of Ireland*; that necessity would make all his acts valid whilst it lasted: but when He could have a *formal Commission* from the King, and would not, is it fit He should be acknowledg'd as *Governour*? or, Is the Power, which necessity convey'd to Him, after that to be obey'd? As, therefore, in these cases, *Necessity gives a Commission* to these Persons, and we allow of this necessity; as they have as much power to act upon this necessity as if they had a Commission in the most regular way; and as they cannot be acknowledg'd to act by Commission when they may, but will not, have it in a regular way, and the necessity

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ceases: so let it be in the case before us. A real necessity gives you a Commission to act, and to go out of the *regular* way. This necessity makes all your acts *valid* whilst it lasts: and they remain valid because they depend entirely upon the Power you had at the time they were done, and not at all upon the Power you have afterwards. But if you refuse to take out commissions in a *regular* way, when that necessity is gone; you have no more pretence to Power and Authority, than the Persons in the Cases before-mention'd.

I see not what can be objected here, unless it be this. Since we allow you no *Authority* in what you do now; and do not think that God approves of your *Ordination*, now you may have *Episcopal Ordination*, and refuse it; why do we not insist upon the *rebaptizing* of those who are *baptiz'd* by you &c.? why do we allow your acts valid now we grant no necessity? to which Mr. Baxter furnishes us with a reply. *If the Lord-Deputy of Ireland were dead, and one should so counterfeit the King's Hand and Seal, as that the Nobles and People could not discern it, and should annex this to a grant for the Place, and shew it to the People, and claim the Power by it; if*



if this man continue the exercise of this Power for a Year before the deceit be discover'd, all his actions must be valid as to the benefit of the Common-wealth, tho' they are treasonable to Himself. From which it is plain, That, as the Honest People ought not to suffer for the treason of their pretended Governour; so God will take care that the truly honest People shall receive no hurt for the fault of others; that, as the King may approve of the actions themselves, as they respect the People; and yet not approve of the person's pretensions to his authority; so Almighty God may approve of the actions of Ministers as they respect the honest and well-meaning People; and yet not approve at all of the Minister, consider'd as such; that, as the Governour's actions were valid, tho' He had really no commission; so the actions of a minister may be valid, and yet his Ordination no proper Ordination; which was the thing I design'd to prove from this instance. Indeed Mr. Baxter seems just before, to lay it down for a truth that if the actions are not null, neither can the ordinations. But, if this instance do not plainly prove the contrary, I confess I cannot understand it, viz.

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*that the ordination may be none at all, and yet the actions not null.* For it is the instance of one who has no commission, but is guilty of *Treason* in what he does ; and yet the *People* are not to suffer for this, because it was impossible for them to discern it; and so his actions are not null: and yet He must have a real Commission from the *King*, before He can act in that post again. The parallel to this *Governour* and his *People*, is the *Minister* and his *People*. As the *Governour* has no authority, and yet his acts are valid; so the *Minister* may have no authority from God on his part, and yet his actions may be valid as to the *people* ; Almighty God not permitting them to suffer for the fault of others.

This too may serve to give some account of the  *blessing of Heaven attending your sacred Ministrations*, which you seem to us, to speak of too often ; because if this may be allowed as an argument that God approv'd your *ordination*, all parties in the World will claim it ; and the most *irregular* will plead it, and patronize under it the greatest *irregularities* imaginable. Pray consider this, Here is a *pretended Governour* with no *Commission* ; many of his actions are perhaps for the good  
of

of the Common-wealth ; and yet this is no argument that he had a *Commission*, or that the *King* approv'd of his acting in his name. So here, The Actions of a *Minister* may be for the good of many honest Persons ; and yet this is no Argument that God approves his *Irregular Ordination*. The Blessing, whenever it is, is a reward to the Honesty of the well-meaning People ; and ought not to be interpreted as an approbation of the Authority of the *Minister* : as the King's permitting the actions of that pretended Governour to be valid, is due to the Honesty of the People who could not find out the deceit; but cannot be thought an approbation of the pretences of that Person, who was guilty of *Treason*, in counterfeiting his Hand and Seal.

The result of what I have said is this: Those of You who were ordain'd by *Presbyters*, without *Bishops*, because *Episcopal Ordination* could not be had (which Mr. *Calamy* gives us leave to take for the true reason) we acknowledge to have had a *real Ordination*; and your Authority to have lasted as long as that necessity lasted ; and consequently, all your Acts valid, even as to the *authority* of them ; this *necessity* making them so as effectually as if you had had



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*regular Ordination.* But when that necessity ceas'd, we dar'd no more acknowledge an authority founded only upon a case of necessity, without a *regular Commission*, when it might be had, than we dare acknowledg him to be truly the *King's Vicegerent*, who, because, in case of absolute necessity, he had the command of a country without a *regular Comission*, therefore when he can have this *regular Commission*, refuses to take it. Those of you who have since the re-establishment of *Episcopacy* refus'd either to conform as *Laymen*, or to enter into the Ministry at this Door; after our most serious consideration, we cannot but judge to have put an open, and visible neglect upon *Regular Ordination*, without an apparent necessity; giving occasion by this means to more grievous Irregularities. And, therefore, tho' we think your Actions valid, through the mercy of God, to honest and well-meaning People; yet we dare not say that God approves your Ordination in a way we take to be *irregular*; nor can we consent by our actions to give encouragement to such Doctrins as this, *That Regularity is not to be regarded, whenever any Persons will pretend a necessity*: for thither this tends, how little soever  
you

you design it. Consider this, and see if there be no reason why you should comply in this point; at least, if there be no reason for us to request you not to go on to lay this unnecessary bar in the way of others.

2. Having thus given some account of the reasons of what we require in this point, I will now consider those Objections I find offer'd in your Names against it. Amongst which I do not find any taken from the unreasonableness of *Episcopal Ordination*; or any thing said against it; but all that is objected is drawn from that unhappy circumstance of an *Ordination* before. And this being still the case, I shall endeavour, if what I have said before be not satisfactory, to remove these Scruples. What I find urg'd is comprehended under these three Heads.

1. The Peace of your own Consciences.  
2. The credit of the reformed Churches abroad. 3. The Scruples of your own People. For, as to *nullifying your past Ordinations*, I hope, I have said what is sufficient.

1. As to the *Peace of your Consciences*, we are not for persuading You to act against your Consciences; to prevaricate or *play with holy Things*. But, if what I have laid down before be true, that an ir-

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regular Ordination is none at all, when there is no absolute necessity ; and; supposing there was an absolute necessity, that it lasts no longer than that necessity lasts ; here can be no *Playing with Holy Things*, to seek it in a *regular* way ; because, according to this reasoning, You are wholly unqualified to act as *Ministers* without it. And we press it upon you seriously to consider, if this be not a fair and reasonable Account of the Matter.

2. As to the *Credit of the reformed Churches abroad*, we think it no Presumption, as we censure not them, who in a Case of necessity went out of the ordinary method, so to expect they will not censure us for not approving *Irregularities*, when there is no such necessity for them. And we judge that you your selves Act as you think just and reasonable, without that regard to them here pretended ; and shall judge so, till we see you remove, alter, and reform ev'ry thing amongst you, which the Reformed Churches abroad disprove, either in their Declarations, or their Practice. Nor do we think you would allow it a good Argument for our insisting upon this, if we could produce *Reformed Churches* abroad of the same Opinion



pinion with us in this Point, unless you were otherwise convinc'd.

3. As to the *Scruples of your People*, we desire to know, whether you will allow it a good Argument for our insisting upon this, that if we should admit You into the Ministry without it, this will *raise endless Scruples* in the Minds of our best and most understanding *People*; to see Men admitted, and acknowledg'd as Ministers, who have, without an absolute necessity, as they think, departed from the settled method of *Ordination*, and wilfully sought *irregular Ordinations*. Now since *We*, as well as *You*, have this Plea; is it not more fitting that this Plea should be laid aside than urg'd as an Argument against *Us*? is it not more becoming, on each side, to argue from the *reasonableness* or *unreasonableness* of the thing it self, than from the *Scruples of the People*? unless perhaps it be worth while to enquire, whether the *Scruples* on the part of *Regular Ordinations* be not to be much more regarded, than the *Scruples* on the part of *Irregular Ordinations*. We desire you to consider, whether, if you your selves were satisfied of the *reasonableness* of this, You have not influence enough upon your People  
to

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to persuade them against *unreasonable scruples*. A thing, which if you had seriously undertaken, how much good might you have done! how much Evil might you have prevented! Now, if you cannot agree to this, because the thing is unreasonable; why are the *People's Scruples* pretended? If the thing be reasonable, and yet not to be done because it would raise *Scruples* in the People; then it is a good argument for not doing a *reasonable* thing, that it will raise *scruples* in others. But this we hardly think to be your opinion, because this would be laying a necessity upon your selves very often of acting unreasonably: and also, because we conceive your *practice* to be against this. Nothing can raise more endless scruples in your people, than *Occasional Communion* with a Church, from which you have made a formal *Separation*. They have been fill'd with amazement and uneasiness, and have not known which way to turn themselves; and perhaps have been induc'd by it to stretch their own Consciences a little, and furnish themselves with distinctions, against they should have occasion for them. And the reasons for this conduct, if I remember right, are declared to be such as the *People* are hardly

ly capable judges of: and yet the demonstration of your *Love and Charity to those You have separated from*, is profess'd to be, in your opinion, of more account than the *scruples* of your *People*. Nay, by this conduct you do the very thing, which you are afraid of doing, if you should submit to *Episcopal Ordination*. For by this you lead the poor people to think that this *separation is not necessary*; (as you acknowledge your selves) and, therefore, that there was no necessity for you to seek *Ordination* in an *irregular* way; and, therefore, that your *Ordination* is not approv'd of God, but is null; and, therefore, that your *ministrations are invalid*. When you can reconcile this *Occasional Communion* with the necessity of a *Separation*, in their opinions; and remove their scruples on this account, by plainly convincing them, that *constant Communion may be a sin, where occasional Communion is so far from being a sin, that it is a duty*; then I will undertake to remove their scruples on the other account; and make it as plain as the light to them, *That your ministrations may be valid as to them, and yet your Ordinations null*. In the mean while, we think it a reasonable argument, If the

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- Scruples of the People ought not to hinder you from showing your Charity, in a way which raises scruples in them ; The scruples of the People ought not likewise to hinder you from showing your regard to *Regularity and Order* , in a way which raises scruples in them ; and ought not, therefore, to make up one of your Reasons against *Conformity* in this point.

Thus much may suffice for the first Head. And in all that I have said upon it, I only take this for granted, that *Episcopal Ordination is the regular Ordination* , which your reasonings under this Head give me leave to suppose. From whence it follows, that your *Ordination is irregular*. From hence I argue, that, as long as we are an *Episcopal Church*, and as long as we imagine your *Separation*, and your *irregular Ordination* unnecessary, we cannot (according to Mr. Baxter's reasoning) acknowledge your *Ordination* such as God approves of ; we must not, in conscience, give any encouragement to *Unnecessary irregularities* ; and, therefore, hope we are not to blame in insisting upon *Episcopal Ordination*. To conclude this head, As you, if you were persuaded that your *Ordination* in an *irregular way* was *unnecessary*,  
could

could not but own that God did not approve of it ; and, therefore, could not but submit to a *regular* one: so We, while we think it so, cannot possibly but think that God disapprov'd it ; and, therefore, cannot but insist upon a *regular* one, before we acknowledge You truly Ordain'd.

II. The *Second* of those *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* which you cannot comply with is this, that Ministers must declare their *unfeigned Assent and Consent* to all and ev'ry thing contain'd, and prescrib'd, in, and by, the Book, Intituled the Book of Common-Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church ; together with the Psalter or Psalms of David ; and the form or manner of making, ordaining and consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons. And they must also (and that *Ex animo*) subscribe these Words, That the Book of Common-Prayer, and of Ordaining Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, containeth in it nothing contrary to the Word of God ; and that it may lawfully be used : and that they themselves will use the Form in the said Books prescrib'd, in publick Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and no other. That the subscribing this *ex animo*, i. e. sincerely

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*sincerely, and heartily*, should be esteem'd a Grievance, is, I confess, a strange Thing. But the Church I see, is sure to be found fault with both ways. If this Subscription had been requir'd without this; then the Answer would have been, we dare not subscribe this, because we cannot do it *ex animo*, and are afraid of *Stretching our Consciences, and playing with Subscriptions and Oaths*. And yet now the Subscription is required to be *ex animo*; this very thing is reckon'd amongst the Circumstances that add to the unreasonableness of it.

The first thing I find objected that concerns my present design, is *the Comprehensiveness of this requir'd Declaration*, aggravated with such Hardships, that I will be bold to say, If we use all other *publick Declarations* after the same manner, it is impossible to comply with any one; and yet (in my opinion) aggravated so unhappily, as to expose and betray even your own design in aggravating it.

For your Comment upon the form of this declaration is this, *Words could scarce be devis'd by the wit of man more full; and more significant, whereby the Ministers might testify their highest justification, and commendation, of every point and syllable,*  
*every*



every Rite and Ceremony, every matter and thing contain'd in the whole Book, and in every page and line of it. In which words I verily think you effectually confute the thing which you would establish: and to these words I appeal, and to every unprejudic'd person who can read them, *if the wit of man could not have devis'd words more full and significant of this approbation you mean, than the words in which our Assent and Consent is to be declared.* For I think you your selves have. And let any one but compare these two sentences together, one of which contains what the Act requires; and the other what you say it requires; and then let him judge whether they be the same. The words of the Act are these, *You shall declare your unfeigned Assent and Consent to the Use of all things in the said Book contain'd, and prescrib'd in these words, I do here declare my unfeigned Assent and Consent to all and every thing contain'd and prescrib'd in and by the Book intituled &c.* Your way of expressing it is this, *You shall declare, not only your consent to the use of this Book, but your assent to the truth of every proposition contain'd in the Prefaces, Rules, Rubrics and Prayers in this Book, in these words,*  
I do

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I do here testifie my highest justification and condemnation of every Point and Syllable, every Rite and Ceremony, every matter and thing, contained in the whole book, and in every page and line of it. I need not ask the Reader whether there be no difference; and whether the latter be not somewhat more than an interpretation of the former. But what follows is much worse than this.

I little thought indeed from some parts of Mr. *Calamy's* Book; from his severe reflexions upon any that have treated the *Nonconformists* after the same manner; from that great regard to *Peace, Truth,* and *Decency*, He every where professeth; I little thought, I say, to meet with such Stuff (quoted out of an Authour selected for that purpose) as He knows in his conscience is nothing to the argument He is upon; and only tends to vilifie and ridicule the *Common-Prayer Book*, and Strengthen the unreasonable prejudices of the multitude against it. But how severely soever He reflect upon others; yet, He himself, in treating of *publick declarations*, cannot forbear (as he expresses it) *transcribing* from one *private* and unregarded Authour, a passage, because it is admirable  
for

*for its peculiarity; and cannot forbear to talk; as if it was requir'd in the Church of England to believe that e'ry tittle of the Common prayer Book was dictated by the Holy Ghost; and as if the Poor Nonconformists had been ejected for not having the Spirit of discerning this.*

You cannot take it amiss if I express my self with some Heat upon such an occasion; because these things set us at an irreconcilable distance from one another; and it may justly be demanded of you, either to discountenance such practices amongst your selves, or else to allow and approve them in others as well as your selves. For I leave it to you to consider if this be just. This person (I give it you, as near as I can, in his own words upon a like occasion) *having met with a weak passage of one Conforming Minister, produces it for matter of Reproach: and having found some crude and unmeet expressions drop'd by a private Person, he brings them forth, esteeming him to speak as foolishly as he could desire, and only such silly things as he knew he could easily shame. And thence he argues against approving, or being fond of, the Common-Prayer Book; as if a man should go to prove the Worship of Christians or Protestants foolish, because there are some weak persons*

Abridg-  
ment P.  
589.



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*to be found amongst them. This method of arguing is too much suited to the Humours of those, who not only hate the Conformists, but are despisers, and deriders of all serious Worship and Devotion, who are hereby confirm'd in their contempt and scorn of Worship and Devotion in general. Or, If He rather choose the reproof of Sir Matthew Hale, than his own; He may find it in the same page, and He will easily see how to apply it to himself. And how much more justly it belongs to this Author, than to that person on whom he hath fixed it, will appear, if we consider the difference of the two cases. For it is one thing to expose what is very weak and silly; and thence to argue against that only which is founded upon what is so weak and silly; and another thing to produce what is weak and ridiculous, as an argument against what is not so. It is one thing to gather together the follies of many Persons, and to expose only these follies; and another thing to bring forth ridiculous stuff out of one neglected Author, and from thence to argue against being fond of a Book, out of which no such ridiculous Stuff can be quoted. This indeed is exactly (in Mr. C's own words)*

as if one should argue against Christianity from the weakness of some who have defended it; but, how the exposing the weaknesses amongst some of it's professors can be so interpreted, I cannot see. For if there be reasonings, and expressions, that deserve this way of treatment; and this be often the most successful way of handling them; perhaps the good that it may do one way, will countervail the mischief it can do another. And I find very wise and serious persons, your selves, and your own advocates, as well as others, of this opinion; if we may judge by their practice. I have seen the silly reasonings of a *Popish* Advocate expos'd, even when they concern'd the grounds of Christianity: I have seen the follies of some conforming Preachers made ridiculous: and both as I thought, not with any disadvantage to the common Christianity. And if there be some, the grounds of whose *Nonconformity* are so weak, as you seem to grant; why may not these be thus treated, so long as what is not so ridiculous be not exposed for the sake of what is? Expose these Quotations, you have here made, as much as you please, it will neither offend us, nor hurt our cause; but

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rather help to put an end to such ridiculous arguments: but do not produce them as arguments against *Assent*, and *Consent*; or against *approving the Common-Prayer Book*, in which there is not the least shadow of any thing like them. This is what comes under the censure of all good Christians. This is *false Logick*, as well as *unbecoming*; professedly teaching men to think ill of what is good, for the sake of what is bad. Pardon this digression: I could not help taking notice of this ungrateful and unseasonable passage, as it came in my way. What I have said is not to be taken, as if I delighted in such a way of writing: but only as opposed to one, who hath been so severe upon others, and yet hath so sadly offended himself. I now return with much more willingness to endeavour your satisfaction in the point we are now upon. And, in order to this, I must entreat you to consider,

1. That we are commanded to confine this *Assent*, and *Consent*, to the use of all things contain'd, and prescrib'd, in this Book, by the express words of the *Act* itself; and forbid plainly by it to refer the *Consent* to the use of all things, and the *Assent* to the truth of every proposition,

as



as you do ; as plainly forbid as we can be. For the Act it self applies both these words to the *use*, and the *use* only; injoyning the Minister to *declare his Assent and Consent* both, to the *use of all things* in this Book. Whoever, therefore, declares his *Assent* to the truth of every proposition in it, and his *consent* to the *use* of every thing prescrib'd in it ; tho' he do not do more than he himself may think lawful ; yet He certainly does more than this *Act* requires, and must be at some pains to reconcile it with the intent of the Act plainly declared. You shall declare both your *Assent*, and *Consent*, to the *use* of all things in this Book, says the *Act* expressly. No, say some, Rather than we will do this, we will make a difficulty here, and say that we are required to *Consent* to one thing, and *Assent* to another. By what authority, I pray you, can this be done ? You can plead no foundation for this in the intent of the *Act*, as far as it is declared ; because *that* determines *one* as well as the *other*, *Assent* as well as *Consent*, only to the *use* of the Book. So that the Act does not leave you at liberty, if you would never so fain, to make this declaration in your hard Sense ; for,

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it requires you not to do it, but to give both *Assent* and *Consent* to one thing, even the *use* of this Book. Now We entreat you not to persist in creating more difficulties than there really are. And that what I have said upon this head may have the more effect, I shall propose to you,

*Abridgm.*  
P. 585.

2. The Example of Dr. Bates, and sundry other Nonconformists, to the number of Twenty; who took an Oath that *they would not at any time endeavour any alteration in the Government either in Church or State, as soon as ever the Lord Keeper had declared openly, that by Endeavour was meant Unlawful Endeavour.* The Lord Keeper then did in effect say thus to them, *You shall Swear that you will not unlawfully endeavour an alteration in Church or State, in these words, I will not at any time endeavour any alteration of the Government either in Church or State.* And the Act of Uniformity says, *You shall declare your Assent and Consent to the use of all things in this Book, in these words, &c.* If, therefore, upon the authority of one single person, they thought it reasonable to confine the word *endeavour* to *Unlawful endeavour*; much more must they think it reasonable, upon the

the authority of that *Act* it self which requires this declaration, to apply both *Assent*, and *Consent*, only to the *use* of this Book. In the one case you have only the opinion of one learned Lawyer that it was meant so ; In the other you are left at no liberty, but are absolutely determined by the very *Parliament* that made the *Act*, that it was meant so. But I argue further, supposing the *Act* it self did not determine both *Assent* and *Consent* to the *use* of the Book, yet

3. The nature, manner, and form of all *Law-deeds*, and *publick declarations*, require this way of Intrepretation, and condemn the other. This is drawn up according to the manner of our Law, in which nothing so common as to gather together words of very little or no difference in their signification, and to apply them all to one thing. Thus, to *give* and to *grant*, tho' there be some small difference in their signification, to *renounce* and *abjure*, and these very words *Assent* and *Consent*, with a hundred other different Terms, are found to be applied to one and the same thing. And, therefore, if the *Act* had only said, you *shall declare that you agree to the use of all things in this Book, in*



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*these words* ; yet I should have thought it much more reasonable, from the constant form of expressing such declarations, to have applied both words to one thing ; than to have argued the contrary way, from the use of two different words. And, therefore, had not the *Act* done it for us, we think it needs no *evasion*, or *distinction*, to determine both *Assent* and *Consent* to the use of the *Common-Prayer Book* ; to the use of all things *contain'd* in, and *prescrib'd* by it. But the *Act* has really done it for us. Supposing, therefore, that some of the first promoters of this *Act* had evil and pernicious designs ; yet since it is a most usual thing in our *Legal Forms* to apply two or more words to one and the same thing ; and since we are all agreed that one of these words ought to be applied to the use of this Book ; I think we may, without the least violence to the words, or our own Consciences, apply them *both* to *that* only, there being nothing against it in the *Act* it self.

Having, therefore, shewn that this *declaration* may fairly and honestly be made with respect only to the use of this Book, supposing the *Act* had not so plainly determined it ; having prov'd from the practice

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Advice of some eminent men amongst your selves, that if one single person of authority in the *State*, determine any *word* in an *Oath* to one certain signification, which is not so plainly determin'd to it in the *Oath* it self, the *Oath* may be lawfully taken; Having plainly demonstrated, that this *Act* it self (the greatest authority we could have) has determin'd expressly both *Assent* and *Consent* to the *Use* of this Book; and is so far from making this *declaration* respect the *truth* of every *proposition* in it, that it never mentions the thing, but says, in effect, what utterly excludes this sense of the words; we humbly hope, that we shall not any more hear of *stretching our Consciences* in this point; and that *You* will not continue to maintain prejudices against this *Act*, which it gives you not the least occasion to take up.

As for the *Subscription* required, I never heard that it was esteem'd any considerable difficulty; nor do I see how it can be, if it be explain'd according to its original design; which appears plainly to be none but this, that all who *minister* in this Church should be under an obligation to *use* this Book. Accordingly three things they are required to subscribe.

I. *That*

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1. That the Book of Common-Prayer, and of ordering Bishops, Priests, and Deacons containeth in it nothing contrary to the word of God. 2. That it may lawfully so be used. 3. That they themselves will use the Form in the said Book prescribed, in publick Prayer, and administration of the Sacraments; and none other. Where it is plain, that this Book is consider'd only as a Book fram'd to direct the Behaviour of those who officiate in publick; what Prayers and what Ceremonies they are to use; without having any regard to every particular sentence inserted in the *Prefaces*, or *Rubrics*, which do not respect, or direct the Behaviour of the Minister. I say not this, because I think there are any such sentences in the *Prefaces* or *Rubrics*, which are contrary to God's word; for I know of no such: but only because I am persuaded this was the original design of the *Subscription*. Nay, those few sentences, not relating to the use of the Minister, which you except against, cannot be thought contrary to God's word, even by you who think them *not true*; for granting them *false*, I do not see how they contradict any thing in the whole Bible.



I have been the more concern'd upon the matter of this *declaration* and *subscription*, because (though I be convinc'd that it is a great crime for any one to profess his sense of any thing in words not consistent with it; yet, on the other hand) I am so far from thinking it a vertue, that I cannot but account it a thing of very ill consequence, and a piece of publick disservice, to deal very hardly with *declarations* and *subscriptions*; to stretch them beyond what the original design of them, or the words in which they are express'd, will fairly and honestly bear, in order to make them appear as rigid and unreasonable as possible. What I think, and hope, I have prov'd, under this Head, may be reduc'd to this; That the declaration of *Affent and Consent* cannot possibly be extended to any thing but the *use* of this Book; and that the *subscription* concerns this Book, only as it is a Book directing the *Minister* what *Prayers* and what *Ceremonies* to use; and has no reference to any thing in it that does not concern the *Minister* who is to *use* it. And from hence it follows, that whoever thinks this Book fit to be used in the service of God, may very fairly make this  
decla-

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*declaration and subscription*, without putting a stretch either upon the words, or upon his own conscience. And I think it cannot be thought unreasonable, that all who minister in this Church be obliged to use this *Liturgy*, and publicly to declare they will use it.

I proceed now to examine the *Reasons*, given in your names, why you think this *Subscription and Declaration* unlawful, and not to be complied with.

1. *This Subscription, and Declaration, would be an approbation of the Doctrine of Real Baptismal Regeneration, and certain Salvation consequent thereupon. For, it would be an approbation of that Rubric, that it is certain by God's word, that Baptiz'd Children dying before actual sin, are fav'd; and it would be an agreement to use constantly after Baptism a Thanksgiving to God, for that it hath pleas'd him to regenerate the Infant with his holy Spirit. This is your first Reason.*

The former part of this relating to the *Rubric*, I deny; having, as I think, shewn before, that both the *Declaration, and Subscription*, concern only your use of the Book; not your highest justification, and commendation, of every point and Syllable,  
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*every matter and thing, contain'd in the whole Book, and in every page and line of it.* But I need not insist upon this. For all the difficulty here is that of a *real Baptismal Regeneration*; and not of *Salvation consequent thereupon*. Supposing this, it is true; and, you say, the Office does suppose it. But, in my opinion, this is undoubtedly true, as it was design'd a part by it self for a general proposition: nor should I ever have call'd it in Question. For is it not true, and what every Body doubts not to say, that *Baptism admits persons into a State of favour with God?* and would any one scruple to subscribe this truth, because there may be a person dipt in Water, whom God does not accept to *Baptism*? I believe not, because the proposition speaks only of persons *duly Baptiz'd*. And, does it not follow from hence, that if they die without having done any thing to put 'em out of this State, they shall be saved? You must be sensible that there is no want of texts to prove the former; and that the latter is as plain a consequence from it as one would wish. Pray consider if it be not very hard to deal as you do with this general Sentence. Consider that  
there



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there is a great deal of difference between these two propositions, *Every individual Child, whom the Minister receives to Baptism, whether he is a qualified subject of Baptism or not, dying after this, without actual sin is saved, and, Children which are Baptiz'd according to God's word, dying without actual Sin, are saved:* and remember, that you can never prove the words to be incapable of this Sense; or that any other was ever intended, or so much as thought of by those who plac'd them here. And that you your selves sometimes understand it without reference to this Church, or this office, is plain from your supposed instance which follows. And sure you cannot think, if this was said of *Baptiz'd Children* in general, without respect to the *prescriptions* of this, or any other Church, that any children were intended by it, but such as are *duly Baptiz'd*, and admitted into the Church according to God's will. Indeed if you demand such a text of Scripture for the *Salvation* of some whom, you say, our Church admits to *Baptism*, as you produce for their *damnation*; we acknowledge, we shall never be solicitous to produce one. We *freely confess our ignorance*; and own that

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we are so foolish as to think that, in the *Second Commandment*, Almighty God, neither by *Children* understood *Infants dying before actual sin*; nor in the *punishment* He speaks of there, had the least respect to their condition in *another World*; nay, we judge it contrary to his nature, and all his declarations, to determine the future estate of any person by the behaviour of another. If this be all that *might make the matter dubious*, I'm sure it may be as true a proposition as ever was laid down for all this. And when you can shew that this Text ought to be understood either of such *Infants*, or of the *punishments* of *another world*, I will undertake to produce as many as you can demand for the *salvation* of all *Infants*. What is farther *objected* is taken from some *supposed Cases*, design'd to prove that according to this doctrine *it is in the power of Men to give Salvation*. We must confess that we are utterly at a loss what to say to such objections; and utterly surpriz'd, when we meet with such distant and extraordinary suppositions drawn in to prove the falshood of a proposition fram'd for a Christian Country, and relating only to Children duly baptiz'd. But we reply,  
that

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that this *Salvation* depends wholly upon *God's* accepting the persons (which this *Rubric* obligeth us not to affirm He does, in such cases as you here put) and that your supposed *Christian King* has no more real power of giving salvation to *Infants* (tho' it should be true that the *Infants* he murders are sav'd) than a *Pagan King* would have, should he conquer a Country of good Christians and kill them all immediately; and yet it may be true that *all good Christians are sav'd*; or no more than every good Christian has the *gift of Salvation* in his power when he brings his Child to Baptism: nay, no more than a *Fever*, or any distemper that kills them has the *gift of Salvation* in its power. Give me leave to tell you, that it is such unaccountable *objections* as this; the stress that seems to be laid upon them; and the study with which they appear to have been sought for; that make some in the world so apt to suspect, and so forward to declare, that No agreement can ever be hop'd for.

But I must not forget to say something to this *Baptismal Regeneration* which you object against. I am so little acquainted with the *Art of Distinguishing*, that I know



no difference between a *regeneration* and a *real regeneration*. If there be a *regeneration*, I think it is *real*: and if there be a *real regeneration*, it is to be ascribed to the *Spirit of God*. And because it always appear'd to me that whoever was received into the *Christian Church* by God's Minister, with Prayers directed by the Congregation to God, and with sufficient security for his good education, was duly received and according to God's will; I never doubted but that God received such to his favour, and heard the Prayers of his People, and approved of their Baptism: and because I thought they were duly made *Christians*, I could not but think the *Holy Spirit* of God resided in them, as they were now the *Temples of God*. The Scripture leads us to think thus; and, consequently, to think, that they are *regenerated* (in the Scripture-notion of that word) as they are enter'd into this new estate; and that by the *Holy Ghost*, as they are intitled to all his influences and assistances, purchased by the blood of Christ. We know not of any thing in Scripture to induce us to think otherwise; and, therefore, we do not separate what St. Paul hath joyn'd together, the *washing of regeneration*

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tion, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. 3. 5. in speaking of the whole Christian Church. But we can hardly persuade our selves that you believe as you speak, when you say, your Reason for not concurring with us in this, is, *for fear of contributing to the hardning of careless men in the opinion that they are regenerate, and need no farther care.* We, on the contrary, think the point now before us a persuasive argument to the greatest care and diligence. For if men were regenerated by the Holy Ghost, and made the Temples of God by Baptism, how much does it concern them to live as such; not to defile the temple of God, or drive his Spirit from them? And in this we flatter our selves that we imitate St. Paul, and the other Apostles, who in their writings have said this very thing, and all the glorious things imaginable of all professed Baptiz'd Christians in general; and yet never thought them an encouragement to security, but always insisted on them as the properest arguments to the greatest care and diligence. And it would be worth while to enquire, whether the same objections do not lye against what St. Paul affirms of Baptiz'd Christians, as do against what our Church says of them.

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The only difficulty here, as I think, is the admitting *all Comers* to Baptism, *without a liberty of refusing the Children of Infidels, or the most scandalous Sinners, provided they have but sponshours*, as you express it. Now this office of our Church was certainly fram'd for a *Christian Country*; a Country where all were professed Christians, and respects the Children of such. And, as for those *extraordinary Cases* in which our Church is supposed to allow Baptism, where is the great fault, and where is the ill consequence of thinking, that, if any persons solemnly undertake the good and Christian education of a Child, they have hereby a sufficient right to devote him to God; that the Church hath sufficient reason to receive the *Infant*; that God will, of his infinite mercy, in regard to their Prayers and good designs look favourably upon him? I say, where is the crime of thinking this? what great design of Christianity, what precept of the Gospel doth this contradict? But I know not that Baptism may not, according to the *Church of England*, be denied to the Children of *Atheists, Jews, Infidels &c.* For the Office supposes a *Christian Country*, and *Christian Parents*. And, as



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for the Children of *Professed Christians*, I account the *Profession* of Christianity in their Parents sufficient to entitle them to *Baptism*; as I find, in the Apostle's days, the *Profession* only of *Faith in Christ* (whether sincere or not) was sufficient to entitle any to it. To proceed,

2. The *Second Objection* against this *Assent, Consent, and Subscription*, is this, that they extend to the use of *Godfathers and Godmothers in Baptism*, to the *Exclusion of Parents*. But here we must complain that this is not truly and fairly represented; but express'd so as best serves to raise and encrease the aversion of the people to the Church. We desire you to consider, whether the *Parents* be not to provide these *sponsors*; whether the *Parents*, in providing what the Church thinks requisite, and offering their Children to Baptism, with this security for their good education, do not truly and properly themselves devote their Children by Baptism to God; whether this be not their own act and deed as much as if they had no *sponsors*; whether any Christian may not engage himself solemnly for the good education of another; and whether his own willingness, do not  
give

give him right sufficient to do this; whether the *Parents* own act, where there are Parents, in offering the *Child* to Baptism, and providing these *sponsors* in order to it, be not supposed in the Office, and, consequently, whether their Faith (in all ordinary Cases) be not the supposed ground of the Child's Baptism (according to our Church) as the Country is *Christian*, and as the Parents are required to provide for their Children these *sponsors*; and, lastly, whether the grossest abuse of an institution, which, if it were but duly regarded, would be most useful, be a sufficient argument against the institution itself. Now, if *the Parents be to provide these Sponsors*, why should it be urg'd, that they are not requir'd to be chosen with due Care; when this certainly will be proportionable to the care and concern the Parents themselves have for their Children; and if they have none, how will the matter be mended by admitting the Parents without the *Sponsors*? And we imagine, that if you had been as diligent in finding out useful *Canons*, as those you account so liable to exception, you would have seen one that shews, that they who require *God-fathers* and *God-mothers*, re-

Can. 29.

quire also, that none should be admitted as such, *before they have received the holy Communion*; and, therefore, ought not to be represented, as if they had taken no manner of care about this, *but opened a wide door to the Profaning this Solemnity*. We confess our selves so short-sighted, that we cannot plainly discern how the method of our Church tends to the *Profaning this Ordinance*, more than the administering it without Sponsors. In the next place, *If these Parents, in providing what the Church requires; in offering their Children to Baptism, with Sponsors; do sufficiently and effectually testifie their resolution to devote their Children to God; and this devoting them in this way be their own Act*; We desire to know, with what justice the Church is taxed with *justling Parents out of their right*; and the People incensed against it by such Phrases as these, as against an unnatural and cruel oppressour? Again, *If the Faith of the Parents (in all ordinary Cases) and their providing these Sponsors themselves, and offering their Children to Baptism with these, be supposed by our Church; and be in truth the ground of the administration of this rite in a Christian Country*; why is the Contrary maintained?



tain'd and fix'd upon the *Church*, as if it were the plain declaration, and professed doctrine of it? Again, *If it be agreeable to the Christian Religion, that a Christian may solemnly take upon him the good education of an Infant*; what need is there of a *natural right*, or *Positive Law*? and how comes the want of these to be an objection against a lawful, I may say, a commendable action? Last of all, *If the grossest abuse of an institution in it self useful* (as we take this to be) *be not a sufficient argument against the institution*; what do you propose to your selves by arguing from the carelessness of *God-fathers* against the use of them at all? Were all the *Ministers* in the Land forgetful of their *Ministerial Obligations*; would it therefore follow that it was not a useful thing for them publicly to own these obligations when they were made *Ministers*? Did all who own their *Baptismal Covenant* in your way prove the most careless and sinful Men afterwards; would you acknowledge the thing it self useless, or lay it aside? yet in this case it might be said, *they were brought to avouch a great untruth in the face of God and his Church*. For you can no more prove that they are sincere, than we can

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that *God-fathers* are, at the time when they solemnly profess themselves as if they were. But above all, it is very hard, that you should speak here, as if this encourag'd Parents in a carelessness about their Children; or as if the Church took off any part of their duty from them, by providing more effectually for their Children's advantage. *Good Parents* can never take advantage from this institution to be unnatural, and careless of their Children; *Bad Parents* may, but then they would have been as careless without it; and their Children in a much worse condition. And though we bewail the little regard many *God-fathers* have to the serious part of their Office (without thinking this an argument against the Church) yet we hope there are some so sensible of their obligations, that they omit no opportunity of doing their duty.

3. The Third, Fourth, and Fifth Reasons why you cannot conform as *Ministers*, are, because this *Assent, Consent, and Subscription*, would oblige you to deny *Baptism* to such as had not Sponsors, tho' they had a real right to that Ordinance; and to the Children of such as would not permit them

*them to be sign'd with the transient sign of the Cross; and to deny the Communion to such as would not receive it Kneeling. I put these three together, because they come under the common Head of Terms of Communion, and Impositions, against which your zeal seems chiefly to lye; and because the argument manag'd under these Heads is not so much design'd against the things themselves, as against the making them Terms of Communion; the lawfulness of which I shall now consider; and so remove, if I can, those objections here brought against it. Only, because you have advanc'd something against the use of the Cross in Baptism, as well as against the imposing it, I must take some notice of that first, and then I shall come to the matter of Impositions.*

All your Argument against this is at last resolved into these three; that this *seemeth* to be a new Sacrament; that it *looks* as if Baptism were not a sufficient Bond without this; nay, at last we find it express'd thus, that though the Church hath declared this sign to be *in token the person shall not be ashamed &c.* yet since the generality are apt to understand it, that *in virtue and power of this sign the person*



person shall not be ashamed, *You dare not concur in giving occasion knowingly of such a mis-understanding to the vulgar and injudicious.* But give us leave to examine what is here objected more carefully. One reason then against it, is, that *you dare not concur in giving an occasion of such a misunderstanding to the vulgar and injudicious.* You dare not use the words *in token*, because *they* may be apt to think you do not mean *in token* of something signified, but *in virtue and power* of the sign it self. Now, what end of our differences can we ever hope for, if such methods be taken; if, when there is no reason against a thing what is acknowledg'd to be *unreasonable* shall be made an objection against it, by those very persons who, in many other cases, do themselves knowingly give occasion of *mis-understanding* to persons somewhat more *judicious* than those who can understand words in a sense, which it is impossible they should be meant in? I could give many more instances, but I will mention but one. *Dare you not concur in Occasional Communion*, because some of the *Vulgar and injudicious*, You very well know, have sad *mis-understandings* about it? If you *dare*, why do you argue here,

here, as if *You dar'd not concur* in this for that one Reason? which we cannot believe, till we see you omit all other things which you your selves think fit or proper, for the same reason. But while you use our service thus, we imagine you have done it some credit, by granting as you here do, That they are *injudicious* persons who can understand by the words here us'd, that any *grace* is supposed by the *Church* to be wrought by this sign, or the use of it; that the words must be *mis-understood* before any such thing can be made out of them; and, consequently, that they must be *injudicious* persons that can think this a new *Sacrament*.

Another argument against the *use* of this Sign is, that *it looks as if Baptism, as Christ had appointed it, were not esteem'd a Bond sufficiently firm and strong*. Not by us, who have declared in exprefs and plain words, that *Baptism is compleat without it*, and the Infant a *Christian* as much before as after it. Besides, We imagine that such an objection as this; as strong, and as concluding, may be made against you, or any who use any *Prayers* at *Baptism*; or administer it with the addition of the least circumstance to the primitive institution

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tution. For all this *looks as if Baptism, as Christ had appointed it, were esteem'd* not sufficient to entitle the Infant to the favour of God, or to the purposes for which it was instituted. You know it is sufficient without one Prayer; and yet this is no objection to you against the use of Prayers at such a Solemnity.

Another objection against it is, that *it seemeth a new Sacrament added to Christ's*. But, if it only *seem* so; and if the words must be mis-understood before it *seem* so (as you here grant) then we account it very unjust for you to assist in perplexing this cause; and to advance arguments to prove what you think, your selves, they do not prove. Now, what is a Sacrament? You say, *It is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace &c.* Let it be so, and by this let any one judge between us. The words in the *Common-Prayer Book* I interpret thus, *We receive this Child into the Congregation of Christ's Flock, as one who is now a Baptiz'd Christian; and, as such, do sign him with the sign of the Cross, to signify that, as he is a Christian, and, consequently, a Servant of Him who died upon the Cross, He is obliged never to be ashamed of the Faith*



*Faith of Christ crucified*; but to glory in it amidst all the scorns the profession of this Religion can expose Him to. I am not apprehensive that here is any constraint put upon the words; nay, they appear to me to be incapable of any other meaning. The things to be considered here are, not so much the *sign of the Cross* it self, as *the signing the Infant with that sign* (for that it is that was design'd to betoken what follows) and the thing signified by that *signing* of the Infant; which is, that, as He is a Baptiz'd Christian, He is obliged to profess manfully the faith of *Christ crucified*. Now, as far as I can see, Here is not the least tittle of grace attributed to the *sign of the Cross*, or to the *signing of the Infant with it*. For the thing signified by this *signing the Child with the cross*, is not, as you say, *Christ crucified, with the Benefits of his cross* (tho' what the Canon says may be true, that under the name of the *Cross* in Holy Scripture they are often signifi'd, which is quite a distinct consideration) but the thing signified by it is, that the Infant is a Christian Baptiz'd, and, as such, the disciple of a Crucified Saviour. Nor is the *Image of the cross* appointed to work this grace by way of  
exciting

*exciting signification.* For no grace is attributed to it. Nor is *the signing the Infant with this sign* appointed to work any grace; but only to signify that the Infant, as a Christian, is obliged to confess and worship a Crucifi'd Saviour manfully and constantly. And what is here of a *New Sacrament* in your own sense of the word? Here is indeed an *outward and visible sign*; but not a *sign of an inward and spiritual grace*; not pretended to be *ordained by Christ*; not used, or in the least meant, as a *means whereby we receive any grace*, or, a *pledge to assure us thereof*. Go from the *Common-Prayer Book* to the *Canon*; explain it as rigidly as possible, so as to make it contradict it self, and the most natural meaning of the words in our service; and, after all, I am sure it is impossible to make out this charge. And after this, I shall only ask one Question. Do you think, in your consciences, that any Reformed Divines, either of this Church, or any other, with whom you agree in your notions about a *Sacrament*, would ever have begun, or maintain'd, a charge against the Church of *Rome* for making *New Sacraments*, upon such a foundation as you still continue to do against the

*Church*

*Church of England?* Had they only seem'd new Sacraments; Had the *injudicious* only *mis-understood* their words, and built their reasonings upon such *mis-understandings*; Had the Romanists, by publick Acts, and by all the writers that handled this subject, declared that, tho' they used an *external significant ceremony*, yet, they attributed no *grace* to it; nothing which either they, or their adversaries attributed to a *Sacrament*; which of our *Reformers* would have continued to have tax'd them with this? which of them would have solicitously drawn up some obscure and almost unintelligible arguments against such proof on the contrary side? which of them would not have been glad to have drop't such a charge upon such plain proof? which of them would have argued against the use of one little part of their publick service which only concerns the *Minister*, because the *injudicious* will interpret a word in a sense of which *judicious* men say it is uncapable? Not one, I verily believe.

And as we cannot agree with you in these Reasons against the *use of this sign*, as it is appointed in our Church; so neither do we think it a sufficient one for the total



tal neglect of it, *that we may witness our dislike and detestation of the vanity of the Papists herein.* We imagine that we witness our dislike and detestation of the Superstition of the Papists by neglecting that use of it they plead for ; by reducing it to a sober and single act ; by guarding it from all possibility of Idolatry and Superstition ; by making it wholly different from what it is amongst them. And we are unwilling to give them so great an advantage against us, as we verily think it would be, if we should, in reforming from them, not only reject and condemn the abuse of a thing, but the thing it self merely because they use it after a superstitious manner. We are of opinion that this principle hath been the cause of great deformities, and irregularities in the Church ; and when it is observ'd, that we run from a Custom, or a posture, or a ceremony, not because it is likely now to be abused, but because the *Papists* have used it in a superstitious manner ; not only the *Papists*, but others are apt to think, That it is *Humour*, and not *Reason* that directs us. Nay, we esteem it more reasonable to insist upon an innocent use of something *they* have abused,

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lest we should encourage a principle as *superstitious* as their practice; and a principle that hath led so many already to neglect *useful* things without any reason; than to take away the *use* of it wholly, because they use it after an ill manner. In a word, We think that the reason why it was ever used amongst Christians is not so wholly ceased, but that it may still be used once in this solemn act of Religion. We think that we have always testify'd our dislike of the Papists, in every thing in which they are departed from the Gospel, as effectually as any of our Brethren of whatsoever denomination; and much more reasonably than those who have run from the *extreme* they are in, to another. We cannot answer to our selves the condemning of a thing merely because the *Papists* use it after another manner. We hope we have taken such care, that it is almost impossible that the use of this sign, as we retain it, should minister to *Idolatry* or *Superstition*; and, upon the whole, we see not that any of these arguments shew that it may not *lawfully be used*.

Having thus consider'd what I find offer'd against the *use of God-fathers*; and the *use of the Cross in Baptism*; and find-

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ing nothing alledg'd against *kneeling at the Communion*, but rather a great deal for it; I return now to that which makes up the greatest and most terrible part of your charge, and that is the *imposition* of these things; the making them *Terms of Communion*; which you call, a *manifest encroachment upon the Kingly Power of our Saviour*; a *making New Terms of Communion*; a *contradicting Christ's appointed Terms*; a *using that power to destruction, which was given to be used to Edification*. - With what justice you have so hard thoughts of the Church of *England* in this particular, I shall now freely examine; wishing you could be as impartial in considering what can be offer'd in defence of this, as you have been solicitous in drawing up this accusation against it. What I have to say on this *Subject* shall be under these following Heads.

1. That the *Bishops*, who are the *Governours of the Church*, have authority to order such things as these which you so grievously complain of.

2. That *St. Paul* says nothing against this in the *fourteenth Chapter to the Romans*.

3. That



3. That Mr. *Baxter's* practice, and the *practice* of the *Independents* is for *Impositions*. These *Considerations* will, I think, contain a sufficient answer to all that hath been objected on this account.

1. That the *Bishops* have *authority* to prescribe these things which are so grievously complain'd of. This authority, we say, they have, as they received the care of the *Church* from their Predecessours; as they are obliged to take the most effectual methods for the preservation of *Order*, and *Decency*, in the publick worship of God; and as it results from the nature of all *Societies*, that the *Governours* of them should have a power of ordering what seems to them most for the beauty, and advantage of them; that they should be the judges of what conduces to this end, and should have a title to the obedience of the people under their care, in whatever does not contradict the *Laws* of that Society by which they are all to be governed. Nor do I find but that you would have joyned with them, in the imposing and prescribing some things. Now then, if I can shew that the very same objections

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may be fram'd against *prescribing* those things which you could have complied with, that are brought in your names against those other things which give you so much offence; this I shall account a good argument to you, that the *Bishops* have authority to prescribe in the one case, as well as the other. I instance in their *prescriptions* about *Time, Place, and Liturgy*. For this particular *time, and place*, in exclusion to all others, are not absolutely necessary; and some honest men will pretend they are shut out from *Communion* by *imposing* them. And, as for a *publick Liturgy*, That you your selves think it *unnecessary*, is plain from your not using one in the *Publick Worship* of God; that you think it lawful to joyn with those *Governours* who *impose* one, is plain from your declaring your readiness to comply with our *Common-Prayer*, were it alter'd as you would have it. And now let us consider, if this be not exactly parallel to the case before us. Whoever will not have his Child baptiz'd with *such Prayers* at the time of *Baptism*, is as much excluded as he that scruples to have it baptiz'd because the *sign of the Cross* is used after *Baptism*: He that refuses to communicate

communicate with us, because the *Minister* uses this *Form of Prayer* at the *Communion*, is as much *excluded* as He that refuses to communicate with us, because He must *kneel*. As many an honest man may scruple the one; so many an honest man may scruple the other. If an honest man may be excluded for scrupling the one; why not for scrupling the other? If *Regularity* and *Decency* may in this case be prefer'd before the satisfaction of the scruples of ignorant, and injudicious, tho' honest men; then, why is it urged as an infallible truth, that *excluding a man* supposed to be an honest man for his *scruples* is a most unpardonable, and intolerable crime in a *Church*?

But, to be more particular, supposing the *Liturgy* were made according to your minds, and you should comply with this *imposition*, which you were ready to do; We desire you to consider, if they who still thought fit to remain *Nonconformists*, might not read this same *severe Lecture* against you; and give in these same reasons for their *Nonconformity*. We dare not causelessly deprive Souls of *visible Christianity* for want of an humane, unnecessary, if not corrupt invention. We dare not make a *Covenant* to rob Christ and the Church of



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*visible members for nothing; and consign those over to the uncovenanted mercies of God, whom He (we well know) is ready to receive as his: and so concur in setting the will and advice of Man against Christ, who said Forbid them not, and was angry with those who forbade them to come to him. Might not one of them thus express himself, as well as one of you? Shall a Minister dare to withhold so much good from, and endeavour so much evil to, the Souls of poor Infants, in denying them their Christendom merely upon the account of some accessories, and scrupled accidents, invented, and imposed by man, and not at all of the Essence of Baptism it self? &c. p. 510. and might not they argue as you do p. 513. We dare not consent to this, because we dare not consent to the altering the Terms of Christ's Covenant, and Sacrament; and to contradict one of his fundamental laws. Baptize, saith Christ, all that are made disciples, all that repent, and believe. No, saith the Church of England, Baptize none that are propos'd, tho' they have all that is necessary to make them the disciples of Christ, unless they, or their Parents would submit to the use of this particular form of Prayer at the time of Baptism.*

*Baptism. This is a manifest encroachment upon the Kingly power of our Saviour, in making new Terms of Communion, which we dare not concur in; a turning the Keys upon those whom Christ is ready to receive; and a positive rejecting such as He requires us to Baptize. And this (as light as the Church makes of it, and they who can joyn with the Church in this) is in our esteem a sin of an high nature, and so would our consenting to it too.*

The same may be said with respect to a particular *Form of Prayer* at the time of the administration of the *Holy Communion*: for a person who scruples joyning in that, is as much excluded from the *Communion*, as He who scruples *Kneeling*. But I add farther, Supposing the *Governours of the Church* appoint the *Morning*, as the particular time for the receiving the *Holy Sacrament*; and some should scruple this (as it has actually happened) we desire you would consider whether the same arguments may not be used against the *imposing* this (which yet you approve of) as you here produce against complying with the Church that imposes *Kneeling*, p. 514. For may not they who should *minister* to these scrupulous

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lous persons thus apologize for their Non-conformity? *We dare not consent to this, because this is a depriving Christ's members of their right; an usurpation upon mens consciences; and a tearing the Church by dividing engines; because this would be obliging our selves to deny the Communion to the people, on the account of their not daring to go against the institution of Christ, the practice of his Apostles and the primitive universal Church; to deny the Communion to such as the Holy Ghost hath required us to receive to it: and because this is an imposing on the Church things antecedently unnecessary upon the highest penalty, viz: Exclusion from Communion; a crossing that great rule of Charity, I will have mercy and not sacrifice; and a using that power to Destruction, which was given to be used to Edification. Even those of us, who cannot charge the celebration of the Sacrament in the morning as sinful, are yet afraid of excluding others on such an account as that, by reason it is far from being so necessary a matter, but that the Church, and the due administration of the Sacrament may be preserv'd without it. And withall, Persons might have a very good reason to be backward to yield to the altering of that Time*

at which our Saviour instituted this Rite: and to be shy of seeming to Symbolize with Idolaters, in celebrating it at that time which it is well known some have chose, out of too much veneration to the elements themselves; which tho' disclaim'd by the Church of England, yet is apt to be misinterpreted. Suppose a man should upon Searching Church-History find (or fancy that He finds) that the time of Celebrating the Communion was never determin'd to the Morning till the Doctrine of Transubstantiation was establisht: this alone (tho' He should have nothing farther to alledge) might be a valid reason for his being shy of that time. But for Ministers to enter into any such Combination as to be oblig'd to tell such men, when desiring the Communion at the Evening, Truly, while you are under this Scruple, tho' I may pity you for your weakness, yet I can't own you for Christians, *this we think hard, and cannot comply with.* All these things may be said against this, or any other prescription not absolutely necessary to the being of the Church, or to the due administration of Christ's ordinances; and the same accusation stands against them, and against those who should approve them.

What



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What I observe upon this, is, that you your selves grant by this, that the *Governours* of the *Church* have *authority* to *impose* some *unnecessary* things; that it is not unlawful to prescribe things *antecedently unnecessary under the highest penalty*; that Men who may be call'd *Honest* may be dealt with after this manner on the account of their scruples; and that these arguments which hold as well against those *impositions* you say you could comply with, as against *those* you say you cannot, are not so plain, and so demonstrative, that a *wise* man ought to found a matter of such consequence as a *separation* from a *settled Church* upon them. For thus the case seems to me to stand. You grant that the *Governours* of the *Church* may impose a *Liturgy*, and prescribe the *Time* for performing Religious offices: for you would joyn with them in these *prescriptions*, and would not *separate* from the *Church* in order to *witness* against these *impositions*. The arguments you urge against complying with the *other* *impositions* do appear to conclude as strongly against your complying with *these*. Therefore I think it follows unavoidably, that you ought to be as willing

ling to comply with the *other* as with *these*; to acknowledge the *power* of the *Governours* in the *other* as well as *these*; to withstand a Separation founded upon the imposition of the *other*, as you would do one founded upon the imposition of *these*; and not to inveigh so bitterly against what you have allowed and approved of, in cases exactly parallel, as far as your arguments are concerned; for it cannot be more against your consciences to joyn in imposing the *other* upon the *People*, than to joyn in imposing *these*. These *arguments* if they prove any thing, prove too much; and, therefore, they prove nothing. Now since these are the only arguments you produce against the *impositions* in the *Church of England*; we think it ought to be a sufficient satisfaction to your Question, *by what authority are these things prescribed?* to answer, by the same authority by which you acknowledge the *Governours* of the *Church* may prescribe some other things, against which the very same dreadful objections lye: and we argue, that if, in *one* case, the *Governours* ought not to be abused and inveigh'd against, for the groundless scruples of the people; certainly in *others* also,

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Obedience should sometimes be preach'd to the people, rather than a violent lecture constantly read against their *Pastours*; and that you ought sometimes to consider whither these principles tend, on which this terrible *invective* against *impositions* is founded.

Now, whatever is thus order'd, becomes a *Term of Communion*. One particular *Time*, appointed; the *Liturgy* prescribed, become *Terms of Communion*; and *New Terms of Communion*, in as much as Christ made them not so; and *unnecessary Terms of Communion*, in as much as neither a *set form* in exclusion to *free prayer* is so necessary, in your opinion, but that the great ends of Christianity may be serv'd without it; and much less the appointment of one hour of the day in exclusion to another, as agreeable to the nature of the Sacrament. Yet these you are ready to comply with; from whence I collect, that you do not esteem it so great a sin to make *new, unnecessary Terms of Communion* as people may be apt to think from your writings; or to prescribe things *antecedently unnecessary* under the penalty of *no Communion* without them; nay, that it is your opinion, that Obedience to the G-  
vernours



*vernours of the Church* is reasonable in such cases; and, consequently, that a *Separation* founded upon an abhorrence of such *prescriptions* (call them *impositions*, or *new Terms of Communion*, or *Terms that contradict the Terms Christ settled*, or *transgressions of the law of Charity*, or what you please) is an ill-grounded and *unreasonable* separation. *Hard names* alter not the nature of *things*; and for all the *hard names* bestow'd upon these *prescriptions* you do not like, I cannot imagine them any more *contrary to the will of Christ*, or the nature of his *Religion*, than *those* which you could have approv'd of, and on which you bestow no *hard words*.

From what hath been said I think it is plain, that those *Governours of the Church* do not sin, or *use the power given them for edification to destruction*, who do not clog the institutions of Christ with troublesome and manifold impositions; who prescribe what they esteem to be in it self reasonable and becoming; what is the greatest security to Religion, and the decencies of publick Worship; who have by publick declarations prevented, and answered all the objections that the scrupulous are apt to entertain against them.

It

It is plain that, according to your selves, in the Case of a *Liturgie*, the Scruples of the numbers that think it a sin to joyn with one are not to direct the *Governours* in their *prescriptions*, or to over-balance weightier reasons. Here then you do not seem to think them chargeable with the ill consequences of such a command; or the *command unlawful*, because it will exclude so many from *Church Communion*. And yet I verily think, that all the arguments produc'd against the *other* prescriptions lye as hard against *this*. And I doubt not but many amongst those whose common cause you plead, are of this opinion. But I speak to you who are not averse to such a Command; and cannot but wonder how you could possibly agree with *one unnecessary imposition*; and yet argue from such principles against *others*, as lye directly against *all*, as well as *some*.

Again, those *Governours* who have order'd nothing, but what if all would seriously comply with, is certainly for the good of the Church, have done their duty, and cannot be charged with sin. And, such we esteem the things commanded. I do not think that you can name one  
single

single ill consequence, should all the people of the Land seriously endeavour to procure *Sponsors* for their Children; comply reverently with *kneeling* at the Communion; and submit to have their Children signed with the sign of the *Cross* after *Baptism*; and I am sure I could name a great many good ones. Certainly that *command* is not unlawful, which, if it be seriously obeyed by all, procures many advantages, and brings not one disadvantage to the Church.

Neither is that *command unlawful* which enjoyns a thing under a *disproportionable penalty*. For if it be, then the Governours of the Church can enjoyn nothing, neither *this particular Time*, nor *this particular Liturgy*. But they may do this, as you acknowledge; and yet the *penalty* to Him whose fault is only a scruple about joyning with this *Form*, and communicating at this *time*, is *no Communion*. Therefore you cannot think this sufficient to make a *command unlawful*. The plain state of the case, in this point, appears to be this. They, to whom the *Government* of the Church is intrusted, are to *prescribe* what they judge fit in the service of God, according to the



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the best light they have; leaving such persons to God and their own consciences, as say they dare not comply with these *prescriptions*. They are obliged to resist *irregularity*, *disorder*, and an ignorant contempt of all authority. If any truly honest man be excluded *Communion* by this means, the *Penalty* is to be considered, not as the punishment of the scruples of an honest man, (which he may have almost unavoidably) but as a *Fence* against *Disorder*; as a stop to such *Errours* as are against the *Peace* and *Order* of this society; as a check to the designs of *wicked* and *unchristian* Men, who, under this pretence, and in such good company, are doing whatever they can to unhinge all, and bring confusion and ruine into the *Church*. You must be sensible from what hath been said before, that there are cases in which it is fit that Men, let them be never so honest, should suffer thus for their errours, granting them to be unavoidable. But this is not to be charged upon the *command*, but upon their weakness, and the ill consequences their *Errours* and mistakes may carry along with them. I might cite *Experience* as well as *Reason* for this, but it is needless.

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This leads us to consider how a good, and understanding Person ought to behave himself, when the Case happens, that some things are *prescribed* in a *Church* which he himself thinks *lawful*, but others pretend they do not; whether he ought himself to comply with these *prescriptions*, and endeavour to convince others that they ought to do so too; or whether it is his Duty to inveigh against the *Governours* of this *Church*, and add life and strength to the unreasonable scruples of others; to patronize those who separate upon groundless prejudices, and with gross uncharitableness, or to plead against their unreasonable and disorderly practices; to maintain an *authority* he himself acknowledges in the *Church* on other occasions, or to countenance the utmost contempt and disgrace put upon it. This we recommend to your sober consideration; and desire you to think how inconsistent it is, to argue against *conformity* from the scruples of others; and yet to pretend that you would have complied if the *Terms of Conformity* had been fram'd to your minds. I suppose you are not so weak as to think that, if all your *Terms* had been accepted, there would not have

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been a number of *Dissenters* in the land, who would have scrupled to comply with them. Now, if the *Scruples* of these persons would not have been a sufficient argument against your *Conformity* upon your *own Terms*; why are they pleaded as a sufficient argument against *Conformity* upon other *Terms*? If they be a sufficient argument against *Conformity now*; why would they not have been, supposing your own *Terms* had been accepted?

Abridgment  
p. 174.

Nor do I see any force in your objection, *that on the same reasons the Bishops impose the Cross and Surplice upon Ministers, they might bring in abundance of ceremonies of the Church of Rome, which we have cast out*; because this will lye against the imposition of every thing not absolutely necessary, as well as those two: and I find you could approve of the imposition of some such things. We think the behaviour, and apparel of the *Minister* who officiates, comes under the care of the *Governours* of the *Church*; and *prescriptions* about *them* are a check to the extremes both of *Indecency*, and *superstitious Pomp*. We think they have authority to fence against these, and to impose rules of behaviour in order to it. But then,



then, we think they go beyond their authority, when they introduce *vain, senseless, indecent* ceremonies, or *abundance* of any sort, to be a trouble and burthen, rather than a grace and beauty to *Publick Worship*. When the *Church of England* doth this, then it is time to complain, and open so yehemently against the *abuse of authority*: And even then, I do not think a *separation* can be justified: Because a *separation* is of a great deal worse consequence to both *State* and *Church*, than a compliance with *authority* in what had better not have been commanded. The *Governour* may transgress his duty in commanding, and yet I may be under an obligation to obey. And the pretence of *witnessing against his impositions* is not of half so much force, as the *witnessing against Publick Disturbance and Disorder*. But since the *Church of England* hath not burthen'd the *Publick worship* with *the abundance of Ceremonies* you speak of; and since these mention'd wholly respect the *Minister*; methinks an objection should not be brought against them, the weakness of which appears at first sight. For how does it follow, *If the Bishops have authority to prescribe two ceremonies, that they*

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*have authority to prescribe twenty? or, if they have not authority to burthen God's service with ceremonies, that they have not authority likewise to prescribe one or two?* The fault lies in the *vanity, indecency, or number of things prescribed*; and if there had been nothing to be objected against the *Romish Ceremonies* from these *Topics*, our *Reformers* would hardly have urged an *abuse of authority* which might be in times to come, as an argument against an *authority* at the present time.

Having said what appear'd to me reasonable in defence of the *authority* by which these things were first *prescribed*, I shall add a word or two about the *retaining* them. The *impositions* on which your heaviest charge is founded, and which we are now treating of, are, *Sponsors at Baptism*, The *use of the Cross* after *Baptism*, and *Kneeling at the Communion*. I do not see but that I have shewn that the *Governours* of the *Church* had *authority* to *prescribe* these; as much authority as they had to prescribe other things with which you could comply. So then, these things were once prescribed by a sufficient authority, an authority to which obedience in all lawful things was due.

The

The persons who succeeded those who first prescribed these things found them order'd, as they thought upon good grounds; they found the scruples and prejudices in the people against them to have arisen since these things were ordered; and this without reason, and without foundation; they found many men of sober understandings who had the meanest opinion of these *impositions*, allowing them either to be such as were lawful in themselves, or such as would not justify a separation; they found that the same arguments that were urged to prove it to be their duty to lay aside *these*, might be with as much strength urged against *others*; and would as effectually prove it their duty to part with their *Liturgy* and any other prescriptions, upon the scruples of the people: and not being willing to acknowledge they had no authority, or right, to insist upon any scrupled thing that is not essential to the worship, or being of a *Church*, they could not but think it proper to insist upon these, rather than make such an acknowledgment; they found, after all, that the advantage and union proposed by the alteration of these terms was likely to prove in the issue



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none at all, unless other things of greater moment, and what they dared not think of parting with, were removed also. Thus therefore they argued, *We find the removal of three impositions demanded upon these two grounds, That We have no authority to prescribe such things; and, that many scruple to comply with them, and therefore cannot have communion with our Church. We have examined these pretences, and we find, that all the arguments that are used against our authority in these things, lie as strongly against it in other things, which many of the Dissenting Ministers themselves would have complied with. We think that if we have authority to prescribe what is not essential to the Christian Church, We ought not to acknowledge we have not: and we judge that if the scruples of the people, tho' never so unreasonable, be the measures of prescribing, and altering; there is as much reason, from this argument, to give up our Liturgy, and all Liturgies, as there is to give up these other prescriptions. If to retain the one, though it hinder many from Communion with us, be not unlawful; neither is it unlawful or sinful to retain the others. And by retaining them in opposition to those who argue so unreasonably, We shall assert that*

that authority we are intrusted with; We shall testify against unwarrantable separation; We shall give what check we can to those principles which have brought such confusion and disorder into this Church and Nation; and we shall resist the designs of evil men, who, as we judge, make use of the ignorance of some honest Christians to overturn our whole constitution, and, under their shelter, strike at our very root and foundation. Thus, I think, the case might be argued, and I see not what can be replied by You, who argue upon the principles I have been now examining. But you may now ask, *Are you then for no alterations?* Yes, I am fully persuaded there may be *alterations* made for the perfection and advantage of the Church. I profess, I shall always plead for *such* as are so; and that so much the more, if they be *such* also as are likely to reconcile any *Dissenters* to it; nay, upon this account, I shall plead for *such* as are *not* so, provided the Church receive no damage from them. But I cannot argue for *any* upon such principles as appear to me to tend to *absurd*, and *unreasonable alterations*, as well as those that are *reasonable*.

Having thus shewn that the *Governours* of the Church have authority to pre-

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scribe those things which you so highly dislike, as well as those which you could have complied with; having shewn from your selves that *New Terms of Communion* may lawfully be made; having remov'd your Objections taken from the *penalty* annexed, and from that unbounded *number* of *Impositions* you fear may be brought into the *Church* upon the same grounds that *these* are; I shall now observe,

2. That *St. Paul* says nothing against this in the *14th chapter* to the *Romans*; in order to remove your objection taken from thence. I find that you urge the *1st* verses of *this Chapter* as an argument to prove that it is unlawful to enjoin *Ministers* to deny the *Communion* to those who will not receive it *Kneeling*; or, which is all one, to prescribe *Kneeling* so, as that there shall be no *Communion* without it. But,

*First*, It is very unfair to apply what *St. Paul* says in one case, to cases not at all parallel to it. *St. Paul* speaks of such groundless *scruples* as were deeply rooted and fixed in the minds of some Persons by the *Religion* they profess'd before their *conversion* to Christianity; *We* speak of such scruples as have been infused into  
many



many men's minds by the *common Enemy*; as have been taken up and hotly propagated, *since* the thing it self was commanded, and in opposition to the Authority by which it was commanded. St. Paul speaks of such groundless *scruples*, and such differences of Opinion and practice as are perfectly consistent with their joining together in one *uniform* manner of *publick worship*: and it is a little hard to argue from what he says of *scruples* of this nature, to what he would say of *scruples* which are wholly inconsistent with it. He speaks of persons who, for what appears, were perfectly disposed to agree in the same *Customs*, and the same *behaviour*, at the *Communion*; and what he would say of persons who are not, we cannot judge from hence: but we may guess by some other places, that he was not so easie, or indifferent, in the matter of *Decency*, or *Custom*, in the publick worship, as you would represent him; and that it was not his judgment, that *Decency*, and *Custom* should always yield to the weakneses of Men; but that *they* should comply with *Decency* and *Custom*. That He was not against *prescriptions* relating to the behaviour of Christians at the *publick worship*, is plain

plain from those *prescriptions* He himself  
 I. Cor. 11. laid down. Such as these; *That Women*  
 I. Cor. 13. *should be silent at publick Assemblies*, even  
 in those days when the *revelation of the*  
*Spirit* was common: *That Women should*  
*be veiled in the Church*: merely because  
 these things were agreeable to the no-  
 tions of *Decency* then in the world. *That*  
*the Prophets, who had any thing reveled to*  
*them, should wait with patience, and observe*  
*a due order in their speaking*, merely to a-  
 void any thing that looked like *confusion* in  
*religious worship*; and the like. These shew  
 that it could not be his design in the *chap-*  
*ter* now before us, to forbid the mak-  
 ing any such *prescriptions*; for being a  
*Governour of the Church*, he made some  
 himself: and that it was his opinion that  
*Governours* may prescribe for *decency and*  
*order*, is plain from thence. As you  
 therefore argue from the example of St.  
 Abridgment Paul who, being himself a Church-Govern-  
 P. 166. our, commanded not the things he here  
 speaks of, but does in effect forbid the Go-  
 vernours of the Church to command them,  
 to shew the unlawfulness of commanding  
 those things; so give me leave to argue  
 from the example of St. Paul, who being  
 himself a Church-Governour, did command  
 things

things of the same nature with those we are speaking of; did himself lay down rules for the regulating the behaviour of Christians in Publick Assemblies; and doth, in effect, give leave to Church-Governours to prescribe according to the rules of Decency and Order; give me leave, I say, from hence to argue, that it is lawful (as far as St. Paul's example can make it so) to prescribe about the behaviour of Christians at the solemnities of Religion; that He no more thought, in this Chapter, of scruples relating to men's behaviour at publick Assemblies, than he thought of contradicting himself; and that the things He here speaks of, and those We are speaking of, are so different from one another, that his rules about them may be, and are very different too. If, therefore, the example of St. Paul be a good argument against the lawfulness of prescribing what men shall eat, and that they shall not be received to Communion unless they do eat it: let the example of St. Paul be esteemed a tolerable argument for the lawfulness of laying down rules and prescriptions about the behaviour of Christians at publick Assemblies. That these prescriptions should be laid aside, when they come



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come to be scurpled as *unlawful*, this chapter is as far from saying as any part of the Bible. It says indeed, *You ought to receive those who are so little instructed in the nature of Christianity, and so prejudiced by their former education and principles, as to scruple things which are lawful; such things as do not concern your customs, or behaviour at the publick Assemblies.* But it says not, *You ought to receive such, tho' they scruple to join with you in your customs and behaviour at religious Worship.* It says not, *You ought to receive such as have taken up their groundless prejudices since such rules were laid down for their behaviour; such as seem to be contentious; such as refuse to comply in mere opposition, as too many do.* It says indeed, *You shall receive Men, tho' they will not conform to your prescriptions and customs in what they eat at their own houses:* but it says not, *You shall receive Men, tho' they will not conform to your prescriptions and customs in their behaviour in God's house.* In fine, We may conclude from this Chapter, that St. Paul, at that time, thought it more prudent to leave men even to their own unreasonable humours in eating and drinking, than to interpose his authority to regulate

late *their own Tables*; but we cannot conclude from it, that he thought it a crime to use his authority to regulate their demeanour at the *Lord's Table*; that he thought it a sin for *Governours* to interpose, or a duty in them when they had interposed, to give up their *prescriptions*, when they come to be scrupled. If you would argue *justly* against *prescriptions* from *this chapter*, you must argue against prescribing something as little relating to any fundamental doctrine of Christianity, or the behaviour of Christians at *publick Assemblies*, as *Meat* and *Drink*: and for any other sort of *prescriptions*, whatever service other arguments may do, I see not how *this chapter* can possibly be to the purpose. And this will appear more plainly to you from what I have to offer farther, and that is,

*Secondly*, That if this *chapter* prove the unlawfulness of *prescribing Kneeling at the Communion*, or *retaining* it when it comes to be *scrupled*; it proves as effectually the unlawfulness of prescribing what you your selves must acknowledge lawful, and what you could have joined with. From whence we may infer, that if it prove not the unlawfulness of *one*, neither does it prove the unlawfulness

ness of the *other*. Some instances I shall give to make this plain. *St. Paul* prescribed, that *Women should be silent in publick Assemblies*, merely because it was decent, and becoming that state of subjection they ought to appear in. Our *Governours* prescribed *Kneeling at the Communion*, merely because it was decent, and becoming the solemnity of that holy rite: arguing, that as we kneel to our *Prince* when we receive a Favour, a pledge of his Love, from him; so it is agreeable to all the notions and customs of *Decency* we have, that we should kneel when we receive the most inestimable pledge of Love from our great *Lord*, by the hands of his *Minister*. Suppose now some *Women* should have been so weak as to have thought it unlawful to have obeyed that injunction of *St. Paul's*, thinking they were constrain'd by the Spirit to speak, and judging their silence to be a crime; (we have lived to see this and many as ridiculous suppositions verified;) would you produce this *fourteenth chapter* to the *Romans*, to prove that *St. Paul* was against prescribing, or retaining any such rule; or that these Persons were to be received, and not censured?



fured? and yet their crime is *taking a lawful thing to be unlawful*. If you would not produce it against the lawfulness of prescribing *this*, tho' some should be so *weak* as to think it *unlawful*; how can you produce it against prescribing *Kneeling* merely because some think it *unlawful*? Once more, suppose our *Governours* had prescribed a *Liturgy* to your Minds, and amongst others a *Form of Prayer* to be used at the *Communion*. Some, you know, and no inconsiderable number, have scrupled joining with a *Form* as unlawful. Now such as these are as effectually excluded from the *Communion* by this *prescription*, as if it were said in express terms, that none shall be admitted, who will not join in this *Form*. Yet in the *imposing* this, you were ready to join. I ask, therefore, If *this chapter* command you to *receive* all whose crime is only *the scrupling a thing lawful as unlawful*; with what conscience could you have complied with this *prescription*, which, according to you, must be *flatly sinful, and contrary to God's word*, because it doth as effectually exclude those whom you ought to *receive*, as any other *prescription*? If it do not, why could you not comply with *other*  
pre-

prescriptions as well as *this*? Why is it produced against *others*, and not against *this*? Is a *Form* of Prayer *necessary* to the due celebration of that religious rite? Your practice shews you think it not so. Is a stated *Form* of Prayer not only *lawful* but *decent*? so is *Kneeling*. But I will urge no more on this Head. I cannot but think I have shewn both from *St. Paul's* example, and your own concessions, that *this chapter* says nothing against those prescriptions which concern the *publick Worship*; and that by the *weak in faith* here is not to be understood every one who is so *weak* as to *take a lawful thing for unlawful*, unless in *cases* parallel to *Meat and Drink*. I shall now add,

*Thirdly*, That *Mr. Baxter's* practice, and the practice of the *Independents*, is *for*, and not *against* such impositions as are the foundation of your heaviest charge against the Church. For the *Independents*, take *Mr. Baxter's* word, who represents them as *stricter about the qualifications of Church-members, than Scripture, Reason, or the Practice of the universal Church will allow*. And if this be not to make *new unnecessary Terms of Communion*, and to refuse those

those whom Christ has commanded them to receive, what is? Yet we observe with what brotherly affection you court them; with what caution you open your mouths against *this* in *them*, and with what heat you can inveigh against any thing like it in the *Church of England*; with what zeal you *join* with them, and with what zeal you *separate* from us. But Mr. Baxter hath not only given us this account of the *Independents*, but hath left upon record something of *himself* so like what he censures so severely in the *Church of England*, that, with all the niceness I am Master of, I cannot see any difference between them, unless what serves to make Mr. Baxter much more liable to censure than the *Church*. We have it related for his honour, as it seems, in his life. A Gentle- Abridgment  
man against whom he had no objection p. 36.  
on any other account (as far as it appears) desired to communicate with Him; only He desired to receive *Kneeling*, and at a *distinct time* from those others, whom He thought so guilty on some account or other, that he scrupled to join with them. Supposing this to be a weakness; one would hardly think it consistent with Mr. Baxter's way of arguing, that he should be  
H denied



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denied the *Communion* for it. But let us see how Mr. *Baxter* dealt with him. *First*, He would not give it him at all, unless *he would submit to discipline, and take him for his Pastour*: so that his *Baptism* and profession of Christianity, it seems, were not sufficient to entitle him to the *Privileges* of a *Christian*, unless *he would submit to what Mr. Baxter call'd Discipline, and take him for his Pastour*. Perhaps the *Gentleman* was persuaded in his conscience that the ejected *Bishop* was his *Pastour*; tho' Mr. *Baxter* had authority to administer the *Sacrament* to him. However, what reason was here from his scrupling this, why he should not be acknowledged a *Christian*? What was there in this error so contrary to any great design of the *Gospel*, or the nature of the *Sacrament*, that he might not be admitted to it? *Secondly*, As to the *Posture*, He would not give it him *kneeling*, unless *He would first hear his reasons against it, and then profess, after he had heard them, that he thought it a sin against God to receive it in any other posture*: both which an honest man might scruple, and yet be fit to be admitted to the *Communion*. From hence it appears of what moment Mr.

*Baxter*

*Baxter* thought an Uniformity in the *postures* of the *Receivers*, and how willing they ought to be to hear reasons to bring them to it. But, *Thirdly*, As to the *Time*, He absolutely refused to give it him at a *distinct Time* from others, tho' he scrupled to receive it at the same time with them. Now here, if I be not mistaken, are to be found the very crimes which are laid by you at the door of the *Church of England*; and somewhat more. In the *first place*, Here is an honest Christian denied the Communion on the account of some scruples he might have, about submitting to Mr. *Baxter* as his *Pastour*, and to *his discipline*: such scruples as affected not his *Christianity*, or his behaviour at the publick worship; which seems to come very near the case determined by St. *Paul* in the *fourteenth chapter* to the *Romans*. In the *Second place*, He is denied the reception of the *Holy Sacrament* in the manner which seems best to him, unless He will hear reasons against it, and profess he cannot honestly take it otherwise. That is, he is denied it, if he should be so weak, and prepossess'd, as to scruple what a man might scruple out of a great regard to the prescriptions of his ejected *Bishop*, and

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yet remain a good Christian. In the *third* place, a *prescription* is laid down, *You shall receive it at the same time with those others, tho' you esteem them schismatical, and disorderly*; and the penalty here is *No Communion*. Now, tho' it be necessary to set some time when the people should meet their *Minister*, yet we cannot say it is any more necessary that all should come at *one time*, than that all should receive in *one posture*; nor do I see that this difference of *time* can possibly be the occasion of greater *breaches* and *schisms*, than a difference of behaviour at the *same time*: nay, I believe there may be better reasons found out for admitting companies, on some occasions, at *distinct times*, than for admitting *different gestures* at the same time. And, I pray, what great *breach*, or *schism*, can we suppose would have been made, had he admitted this *Gentleman*, and his Family, at *one hour* to the Communion, and the *others* at *another*? What great *schism*, I say, more than was amongst them already? Their opinions and hearts were as different already as they could be; and there was no hopes of their communicating together, without greater occasion



occasion given to heat and uncharitable censures. Had Mr. *Baxter* been sure he should have set all his people in flames; I see not how, according to his arguings against the *Church*, he could with a safe conscience, deny the *Communion* to this *Gentleman*, were his *scruples* never so unreasonable, and weak. Now I have this charge against this carriage of Mr. *Baxter's*. Here was a thing as unnecessary as *Kneeling* enjoined; and that under the highest penalty, viz. No *Communion*. From whence I collect that it could not be Mr. *Baxter's* opinion that a *Command*, by having a disproportionable penalty annexed, becomes unlawful. Here were new *Terms of Communion* imposed upon a Christian, and as contrary to *Christ's* as the imposition of *Kneeling* can be. *Christ* says, as you think, Receive a Christian, tho' he be so weak as to take things lawful for unlawful; yet Mr. *Baxter* refused a *Christian*, whose only crime it was to be so weak. From whence I conclude that when he was a *Governour* himself, it was not his judgment, that it was unlawful to lay down such *prescriptions*, as do indeed become *New Terms of Communion*; that it was not his judgment that St.

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Paul, in the *fourteenth* to the *Romans*, speaks of such scruples as respect the *publick worship*; or understood by the *weak in Faith*, every person who was so weak as to judge a *lawful thing to be unlawful*. For we see such a *weakness* may be of that consequence, in Mr. *Baxter's* opinion, as that the person who is so weak ought not to be *received to Communion*. Upon this I cannot help making this reflexion, that the dispute between *Us* and *You* is not, whether there shall be any impositions or no, but whether they shall be such as *Ours* or *Yours*; whether the *Bishops* shall prescribe what *they* think fit, or whether every particular *Minister* shall be left to himself, to make what *Terms of Communion* he thinks fit; to receive, or reject whom he pleases, and on what condition he judges proper. It is too plain this will be the consequence of wresting this power out of the *Bishops* hands; and that this is the practice wherever a *separate Ministry* is erected: and we leave it to all the world to judge, whether the *Bishops* have not as much right to make these *Terms*, as every *Pastor* and *Curate*; and whether the *Christian* world be more likely to suffer by all *Ministers* acting according to *their* prescriptions, than

than by their acting according to their own humours and opinions, passions and prejudices.

Thus have I carefully considered the *Case of Impositions*, which seems to be the great hindrance in your way to *Conformity*; and have chosen to argue with you upon this matter chiefly from your own concessions, and your own practices; which appears to me to be so convincing a method, that I cannot but hope that you will once more review this part of your cause; and that, in arguing against the *impositions* of the *Church of England*, you will either shew us, that you allow no such *impositions*, either in your declarations, or practice; or else reason against them from such principles, as conclude not against all as well as some. Till you do this, we must think, either that you are not sincere in drawing up this heavy charge against the Church, while you allow and practice the very thing you condemn; or that you are not sensible whither these arguments tend. But I proceed.

6. A *sixth* Reason why you cannot conform as *Ministers* is, because *this Assent, Consent, and Subscription would be*



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*an allowance and approbation of that assertion, that Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are three distinct Orders in the Church by Divine Appointment. By Divine Appointment, you add your selves: For all that the sentence, which you quote, says, is that these Orders have been in the Church from the Apostle's times: and all that you can shew certainly to be implied in any of the Prayers in the Ordination-office is, that God hath appointed divers Orders of Ministers in his Church. And you not only add this, but you wholly alter the form of that sentence in the Preface to the Ordination-office, on which you ground this objection; and seem to me to misrepresent the plain design and intent of it. For there is some difference I think, between these two sentences. Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are three distinct Orders in the Church, by Divine Appointment; and, from the Apostles time, there have been these Orders in Christ's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. The former of these is yours; and leads people to think, that the principal intent of this sentence you scruple, was to lay it down for an undoubted truth, that Bishops, Priests, and Deacons are three distinct Orders (in the most*

strict

strict sense of that word, and in opposition to those *Episcopal* Men, who did not approve of that word taken in so strict a sense) and that by *Divine Appointment*. The *Latter* is the *sentence*, as it is expressed by the *Church* it self; and the design of it is plainly no more, but to signify, that *Bishops*, *Priests*, and *Deacons*, have been in the *Church*, from the very beginning, distinguished from one another by their peculiar *offices*. But if you take a pleasure in representing, and understanding every thing in the way which to you carries most difficulty along with it, we cannot help it. Thus, another difficulty is made, that these *Orders* are spoken of as *several offices*; tho', how *Bishops*, *Priests*, and *Deacons*, if they be spoken of, either as three *Orders*, or as three *Degrees* in the same *Order*; how, I say, they can possibly be spoken of any otherwise than as *several offices*, I shall never apprehend. But I have two things to answer to this *objection*.

I. Neither *Assent* and *Consent*, nor *Subscription*, oblige you to agree to every individual sentence in the *Prefaces*, and *Rubrics*, belonging to the *offices* of the *Church*. I have before sufficiently shewn, and I here

here say it again, that *Assent* and *Consent* refer to nothing but the *use* of these *Forms* in publick ministrations: and that *Subscription* cannot reasonably be extended to this *Book of Common Prayer, &c.* in any other sense, than as it is a Book directing him who officiates, as to his behaviour, and the Prayers he is to use; and doth not appear to have been intended for any thing farther. Besides, if it were design'd to extend to every particular sentence of no relation to *use*, it affects not the matter now before us; for the effect of it is this, that *this Book containeth nothing contrary to the word of God.* Now I hardly think that any thing can be produced out of the *word of God*, to which this sentence is contrary. For there is no Text of Scripture which says *this is not evident, &c.* nor is there any thing in Scripture from whence it may be plainly proved, that this is a false proposition, *Bishops, Priests and Deacons have been in the Church from the Apostles days.* There is no passage in the New Testament that either forbids that there should be such *Orders*, or says that there were not. But,

2. Supposing this *Assent, Consent, and Subscription*, did extend to every such sentence

tence



tence as this; yet I see nothing in your objections against this, but what seems very hard and unreasonable. When it is said, *This is evident to all diligent readers*, can any one imagin that the intent of this is, that it is impossible any such should ever doubt of it? or that any thing more was designed, than to signify, that it was a plain truth? Should we deal thus with all such expressions, what could we hear that would please us? Suppose it should be said, *It is evident to all Men diligently reading Holy Scripture, that our Saviour existed before he was born of the Virgin Mary*; would you scruple to subscribe to this, because the Socinians, who have diligently read *Holy Scripture*, say they cannot find it there? I believe the objection would never have enter'd into your heads. Nothing is more usual than such *forms* of speech; and nothing more unreasonable, than to pass by the principal thing intended by them, and to argue against the manner of expressing them taken in a literal Sense, when it is always *figurative*. We must be sensible, there are many causes why very considerable men sometimes miss of a very plain truth; and if we be afraid of saying, *this is a plain truth*, because

because *Calvin*, or *Beza*, or *Blondell*, or *Salmasius*, or *Cartwright*, or *Selden*, or any others did not think it plain; and argue from hence against agreeing to it, we shew more regard to *great names* than is allowable. Was this sentence designed to cast a reflexion upon any *learned* or *judicious* men? You cannot think it was. Do you make any scruple of differing often from them? You know you *do* not; I'm sure you *ought* not. Do not you *run them down as Novices*, and call them *Fools* as much, and as effectually this way, as you can do by *subscribing* this? Yet you do not think that a good argument against judging as you think fit. Is not the principal design of a sentence to be regarded, and the *manner of expression* to be interpreted according to *use*, and not according to the *letter*? yet here you take the *manner of expression*, quite contrary to what you do in common *use*; and draw objections from this *manner of expression* so mistaken.

As to the thing intended in this sentence, it is plainly this, that *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, have been in the Church from the Apostle's days*. Now this Truth hath been very much cleared

since

since the reformation; and the unhappy necessity some *Learned Men* imagined themselves under, to contradict and obscure it; and the desire they had that it should not appear of great consequence, hath helped mightily to the clearing it. Arch-bishop *Usher* may very well appear in the head of those who have added great evidence to this proposition. If he differed from other *Episcopal* men, the difference may well be thought *verbal* and not *real*; if we consider the service he hath done to *Episcopacy*, in opposition to the *Presbyterians*. Bishop *Pearson* and others followed. Dr. *Hammond's* Dissertations against *Blondell* (saith Mr. *Chillingworth* who uses not to speak unreasonably) never were answered, and never will. Mr. *Chillingworth* himself thinks the proof of this truth amounts to such a *demonstration*, as can never be evaded. He produces several *Presbyterians* allowing, that from the *Apostle's* days there was in every City one Person, who had priority of Order, and superiority of Power and Authority over other *Presbyters*. Mr. *Baxter* himself thinks it evident that in the *Primitive Church* there was a *Superiority* over *Pastours* maintain'd not only by the *Apostles* and *Evangelists*,

*Abridgment*  
p. 114.



lists, but by other general unfixed Church-officers; and, as to fixed Bishops of particular Churches, superiour in degree to Presbyters, that the reception of them in all Churches was early and general. He is pleased to add, there is nothing favouring these in Scripture. Now in the sentence before, he acknowledgeth that it appears from Scripture that there was a superiority of one over many Pastours; not only of the Apostles, but of others commissioned by them. From whence I conclude, that there is in Scripture a great deal to favour this Superiority (even according to Mr. Baxter) and nothing against a fixed Superiour. Now the principal part of the Question here is, whether Superiour or no, not whether fixed or unfixed; tho' I must observe, upon this part of the Question also, that this very early, and universal reception of fixed Bishops (which Mr. Baxter confesses) is it self a good argument, that there were such constituted by the Apostles themselves; and that the constitution of such was judged most agreeable to their mind. How else can we imagine that the reception of them should be so universal, and so early, that you cannot name the place, or time, from the very

very days of the *Apostles*, in which they are not found? Nor, in the matter before us, doth it signify much, whether the *Scriptures* instituted any particular form of Church-Government, in contradiction to any other or no: tho, if you will follow Mr. *Baxter*, you must think they did. The point is, whether in fact there were in those early days, *Bishops*, *Priests* and *Deacons*. Mr. *Baxter* says there were. And they were sufficiently distinguished from one another. As *Deacons* were not *Priests*, so all *Priests* were not *Bishops*. The *Bishop* was the *superiour*, and had his *Presbyters* under him. So that, as to the peculiar Office of *Bishops*, in the main here is no difference; and an agreement in the whole matter deliver'd in this proposition that *Bishops*, *Priests* and *Deacons*, in the sense that we all understand those words in, were in the Church from the very beginning. And what if they be called *Orders* by others? If you acknowledge the very thing which is meant in this sentence, why should this word trouble you; I think it a very proper word: but if I did not, yet if I acknowledged what Mr. *Baxter* does concerning *Bishops* and *Priests*, I could never answer to my self the

the scrupling this sentence because they are called *Orders*. If any other word had been here used, let it be *Degrees*, or what you please, the like Cavils exactly might have been made against it, by any who would have been at the pains to do it.

Thus much for your *principal Reasons* against the *Assent* and *Consent*, and *Subscription*, required in the *Church of England*. Let us now proceed to some others you propose of *lesser consideration*; yet such, as seem to you sufficient to keep you from *Conforming* as *Ministers*. As,

I. You cannot consent to pronounce all *saved*, that are buried, except the *Unbaptiz'd*, *Excommunicate*, and *Self-Murtherers*; as, you say, all *Conforming Ministers* are obliged to do. In return to this objection, I shall not trouble you or my self with searching out some possible sound sense, in which some of the *Passages* in the *Burial Office*, against which you except, may be understood. For could I shew you, that God may be said to *take* even a very wicked man away *in mercy*; and that we may *give him thanks* for it, in a just sense; yet I do not love to go against the first design of such *publick forms*; and, after all, though those *expressions* might possibly  
be



be used of persons of whom we had not the least reason to *hope* well; yet these words, *As our hope is this our Brother doth*, in the last *Collect*, can in no sense be applied to such. It must, therefore, be owned, and it is too plain to be denied, that in such cases as you mention, of *men cut off in the midst of notorious sins, Drunkenness, Adultery, Murther, &c.* this Office is wholly improper: and sure, we need not doubt but that at length some regard will be had to the repeated desires of many of the best Defenders of the Church; and this ground of *objection* against it wholly removed. In the mean while, I have somewhat farther to offer to you.

Only before I do that, I must take some notice of *two things* which I think unreasonable in your management of this Head of accusation. 1. In that sentence, *God hath taken the Soul of our departed Brother to himself*, you will interpret those words, *to himself*, as if they certainly signified, *to happiness*; when they are capable of another sense; and a sense that is justifiable by what Solomon saith of *Death* with respect to all men. *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who*  
Eccl. 12. 7.  
I gave

## The Reasonableness

*gave it.* If the Spirit of all men may, in a sound sense, be said *to return to God*; then it may also be said, in a sound sense, that *God takes to himself the Spirits of all men*, when they die. The same interpretation that we fix upon the *one*, we may, with equal justice, fix upon the *other*; and if the *one* be a true proposition, so is the *other*; the same objections lying against the manner of expression in both.

2. You deal very hardly with this sentence, *We commit his body to the ground in sure and certain hope of the resurrection unto eternal life, &c.* These are the words in the *Common-Prayer Book*; and if we *Christians* may not be allowed, when we *commit a body to the ground*, even supposing it the body of a *wicked man*, to say thus, *We commit not this body to the earth as men who believe the bodies thus laid in it shall remain there for ever; but as persons fully persuaded that there will be a resurrection of the bodies of all men at the last day* (which is, I am sure, the true interpretation of those words) it is very hard. But here I find these words, *a happy resurrection*, put instead of *the resurrection*, for what reason I cannot certainly tell: and it is affirmed that this must necessarily refer to the *dead person*, and that  
so

so as to signify a certainty of a *happy resurrection* to him, because, in one of the following Prayers, we pray, that *we may rest in Christ, as our hope is this our brother doth*. We are told, *this puts it out of doubt*. I can do nothing here but appeal to the words, as I have transcribed them from the *Common-Prayer Book*, and to that interpretation I have given of them; which indeed is so natural, that I never could frame any other to my self: and must leave the *Reader* to judge, whether this be a good way of reasoning; remembering that the word *Hope* may be used, when we are remov'd many degrees from *Confidence*, and are upon the very borders of *Fear*; but that the words, *sure and certain hope*, cannot be used but in the case of a *confident expectation* without the least *doubt* or *fear* in it. This is the case. In a Prayer at some distance from this sentence the Church *hopes* (which, in the lowest sense of the word is far from *certainty*) that this person *rests in Christ*. Now, how doth *this put it out of doubt*, that, in *this* sentence, *committing his body to the ground, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life? &c.* The Church must necessarily refer to his par-



ticular resurrection only : and signify by  
 these words a *confident assurance* of his  
*happy* resurrection ? The using of this  
*word* in the *last Prayer* is so far from *put-*  
*ting this out of doubt* ; that it does not so  
 much as make it *probable* : nay, there not  
 being other evidence for this, it appears  
 to me rather to prove the contrary. For  
 if, the *Church*, where it undoubtedly  
 speaks of the *dead person*, make choice  
 of a word which may be used where-ever  
 we have not certain demonstration that  
 he is incapable of Salvation ; this leads us  
 to think that if words be here used im-  
 porting no less than the *highest assurance*  
*and most confident expectation*, they were  
 not intended to refer to the *Salvation* of  
 this particular person ; the *one* being ap-  
 plicable to a vast number of persons, of  
 whom the *other* cannot possibly be used.  
 But tho' this be utterly insufficient to *put*  
 your interpretation *beyond doubt*, yet I  
 think verily I can produce something  
 which, if you be truly willing to ac-  
 knowledge it, will *put it beyond doubt*,  
 that the interpretation I have given is  
 both agreeable to the words, and intend-  
 ed by our *Church* ; and that is, the al-  
 teration of this sentence as it is to be used  
 at

at the *burial of the dead at Sea*: and I do not see how you can deny the same sense to be intended in both. *We therefore commit his body to the deep, to be turned into corruption, looking for the resurrection of the body, and the life of the world to come, &c.* Compare the *two Forms* together, and see if this do not plainly shew, that the meaning which you have so positively affixed to the *other* was never thought of by those who drew it up.

Having taken notice of these *two* things, what I have farther to offer upon this Head is this, that I do verily think that a *Minister* in the *Church of England* is under no obligation to use these *expressions*, which are the ground of your objection, in such cases as you mention; over notorious, incorrigible, impenitent, *Adulterers, Drunkards, Blasphemers, Murtherers*, or the like: nor ever likely to suffer the least inconvenience for *omitting* them. I design not by this to teach any persons to play with what ought to be sacred amongst Christians; or to make light of *Declarations* and *Subscriptions*. I hope I am far from it: and if what I now say cannot be demonstrated to be perfectly consistent with all the obligations a *Conforming*

*Minister* is under, I here renounce it as soon as I have said it. I desire then, it may be considered. 1. That the *omission* of these sentences, in such cases, is not contrary to the original design of the *Church* in prescribing this *form*; but more agreeable to it than the *using* them. I find it almost unanimously affirmed by as great Writers as any that have appeared in this cause, that this *office* supposes such *discipline* in the *Church*, that all notorious and incorrigible sinners should be *excommunicated*, and so incapable of this *office*. If this be so, and yet no such *discipline* exercised; to what part of his charge, to what part of his vow is *He* false, who either denies the *office* to those, of whose acceptance with God there cannot be the *least hope*; or omits these *expressions* which render this *office* so improper on such occasions? I desire it may be remembered, that I am not now encouraging any persons to judge hardly of their Neighbours; but speak only of such *cases*, where it is most apparent, and undeniable, that there is no ground for the lowest degree of *Hope*. Supposing therefore a Man cut off in the midst of such sins as *Adultery*, *Blasphemy*, *Swearing*,  
*Drunk-*



*Drunkennes*, without the least sign of *Repentance*, or acceptance with God; were these *expressions* design'd for him? Can the *Canon* which respects this, be supposed to command the *use of this form*, any otherwise than as it was designed by the *Church*? Do any of our *Governours*, or did they ever insist upon obedience to the *letter* of this *Canon* in such cases? not as I know of; and if they did, I should venture any penalty rather than obey: because my conscience would not let me say, *I hoped* the dead person *rests in Christ*, when there cannot be the least ground for *hope*; and because I cannot reconcile such an obedience with the obligations I am under to the *Church*. But, as for *omitting* what was never intended by the *Church* for such *occasions*, I could do it with a very easy conscience: having by no *vow*, *declaration*, or *subscription*, as I apprehend, obliged my self to the use of any thing against the plain intent of that *Church* in which I minister. And did it appear, that it was the design of this *Church*, and of the *Governours* of it, to oblige those who *minister* in it to declare in publick, that they *hope* common *Swearers*, *Drunkards*, *Adulterers*, *Murtherers*,

## The Reasonableness

*Blasphemers*; that such as these, I say, dying without any sign of acceptance with God, *rest in Christ*; what man, who had the least sense of Religion, could *conform* as a *Minister*? But, 2. You tell us here of some *Conforming Ministers*, who will not allow this *office* to *Dissenters*, under the Notion of *Schismaticks*. Upon the authority of these persons then, this *office* may certainly be denied to some who are not actually *excommunicated*. For, as they deny it to some *Dissenters*, who, they think, ought to be *excommunicated*, whether they be or no: so it may reasonably, and upon the same foundation, be denied to notorious and incorrigible *Drunkards*, *Adulterers*, and the like, tho' they be not actually *excommunicated*. Nothing is plainer than that such as *these* shou'd be disowned by all *Churches*, and not esteemed as *Christians*. This is a *Canon* of *St. Paul's*, of as long standing almost as the *Gospel* itself. And certainly, no Church that speaks any thing of *Excommunication*, can be supposed not to design that notorious, incorrigible *Adulterers*, *Murthe- rers*, and the like, should be *excommu- nicated*, as much as it designs that any others should. If therefore this *office* may be

be denied to any *others*, certainly it may to *these*: and if the *office* may, then also those expressions in it which make it so improper.

In one word, what I esteem truly satisfactory on this Head is this; You may be *Ministers* in the *Church of England* without obliging your selves to *use* this *office* over such impenitent wretches as you mention; for neither *Assent* and *Consent*, nor *Subscription* can refer to it any other-wise than as it was designed by the *Church*. You may *minister* in the *Church of England*, *preach*, *exhort*, *instruct*, do all imaginable good to the Souls of Men for many years together, (for your whole lives, if you please,) without being obliged to *use* this *office* over any, either good or bad. And I remember the *ejected Ministers* somewhere speak, as if they should have been contented, if they could have been *Preachers* only in this *Church*. But farther, if you should take a *Cure* of a Parish upon you, and perform all the *offices* of a *Minister* in it, perhaps these cases you mention, may not happen; and if they do happen, I am persuaded you may omit these *improper sentences*, without being false to any part of your trust; and without suffering any  
incon-



inconvenience for so doing. And after this, I think you cannot say, or think, with any justice, that you cannot conform as *Ministers* without pronouncing all *who are buried, saved*, let them be never so wicked, and never so void of all signs of acceptance with God. And if you can conform without this, then this objection against it is removed.

2. *You cannot consent to a false Rule for finding out Easter-day.* You truly say, that *this is but a Trifle*: yet, I shall neglect nothing which I find seriously proposed as an argument against *Conformity*. And, in answer to this, I should not doubt to shew, that supposing this *Rule false*, a Man may with a very safe conscience both declare his *Assent* and *Consent*, and *Subscribe*; were there any necessity of making this concession. But this I omit for a better reply; which, if you find it to have truth in it, must for ever remove this reason of *Non-conformity*. And that is, that this is wholly founded upon a mistake of your own. The *Rule* neither contradicts the *Table* in the *Common-Prayer Book*, nor the *Common Almanacks*, which agree with the *Table*. Only the thing is this; you judge of the *Moons* by  
the

the *Common Almanacks*, which are there set down according to the reformation of the *Kalendar*; and the *Rule* speaks of the *Moons*, as they are to be found in our own *Kalendar*, according to the account in use before that reformation, when this *Rule* was first settled. Now, tho' the *New* and *Full Moons*, in our *Kalendar*, be not so agreeable to the *Moon* in the Heavens, as the *New* and *Full Moons* in the *Almanacks*, yet it is hard to judge of the falsity of a *Rule* which respects the *Moons* in one account, by the *Moons* in another account. The *Rule* is true if we understand it aright. The *Table* agrees with it perfectly; for it only tells what day of the month *Easter-day* always falls, according to that *Rule*; and *Easter-day* in the *Almanacks* is the same that it is in the *Table*. And so both say nothing but what the *Rule* it self directs. I need not tell you how to find the *New* and *Full Moons* by the *Kalendar* in the *Common-Prayer Book*: nor is it worth while to say any thing more upon this Head.

3. You cannot agree to read *Apocryphal Lessons &c.* and therefore cannot conform as *Ministers*. In answer to what you say under this Head, I shall not go against my

my own judgment so much as to plead for the retaining any one thing in the publick service of the *Church*, that is justly suspected to be *fabulous*. Nor shall I now enquire, whether all the stories here mentioned be *fabulous* or no: but shall only at present argue thus. Is it *unlawful* to read any Books in the *Church*, in which there are very many useful and excellent things, as well as some few relations suspected to be *fabulous*? Is it *unlawful* to tell one of these *stories* in the Pulpit, or a *story* the truth of which may be as much suspected as any of these? It is notorious that this hath not been scrupled by many who have scrupled the other: and yet, if *this* be not *unlawful*, neither is the other; and if it be not *unlawful*, it may be complied with.

Art. 6.

I desire it may be considered also, that Our *Church* hath sufficiently, and openly, declared what a distinction she puts between these *Apocryphal* Books, and those which are *Canonical*; that no Chapter out of these Books is appointed to be read in the *Service* for *Sundays*; that these Books are full of most excellent lessons and instructions; full of such instructions as it is good for the People to be acquainted with;



with; that they have been always highly esteemed in the *Church*; and that on those days they are read in the *Church*, there are also lessons out of the *New Testament* appointed with them; and all things necessary for the publick Service of God. Nor can I think, that you judge it a *sin* to read these Books in the Publick Service of God, as the *Church of England* hath declared they should be read, *viz.* *for example of life, and instruction of manners, but not to establish any doctrine.* And if it may be done without *sin*; certainly it were much better to read a great many useful things, and amongst them a *fabulous* story, once or twice in a year, than to divide the *Church* under this pretence. Art. 6.

But you argue not only against reading those parts of the *Apocrypha* which you suppose to be *fabulous*, but against what you acknowledge to be *valuable* in it also, representing these books as read *under the title and notion of Holy Scripture*; nay, *in the room of Holy Scripture*. This we account hard indeed, that our *Church* should be thus represented, when it hath been declared after the most publick manner, that *in the name of the Holy Scri-*

Art. 6.

Scripture we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority there never was any doubt in the Church. And in the same article the Apocryphal Books are number'd up, and call'd the other Books; and it is professed, that the Church doth not apply them to establish any doctrine. Now, can any one suppose after this, that this Church reads these Books under the notion of Holy Scripture? Nay, is it possible the Church should be so inconsistent with it self? You can produce no sentence out of all it's publick offices, or declarations, in which the Apocrypha is called the Holy Scripture. The Order which you cite for this, follows the Order concerning the Psalter, and is intituled, *The Order how the rest of Holy Scripture is appointed to be read.* And in it there is not one word of any thing but the Old Testament and the New. The Apocrypha is not named. I grant indeed that in the Rubric the First Lesson is said to be a Lesson out of the Old Testament, and yet some of the First Lessons are out of the Apocrypha. But, because this is thus exprest, where exact niceness was not at all necessary; must this be the foundation of an Objection which you

you your selves know how sufficiently to answer from that *article* of our *Church* in which these Books are spoken of designedly, and therefore with more exactness? They must be very severe indeed, and strongly inclined to find fault, who can pass by the plain declarations of the *Church*, where it professedly speaks of the *Apocrypha*; and build such a charge as this, upon an *Order* where the *Apocryphal* Books are not so much as named; and upon a *Rubric*, in which the greatest exactness of expression was neither required nor designed.

It sounds very hard too, when you say that these Books are read *in the room of Holy Scripture*, and that *some Canonical Books are omitted, curtailed, mutilated*, and the like. These are *phrases* that leave a strong impression upon the minds of the people; and you need not doubt of prejudicing them against our *Service* with such terms of accusation as these. But you must be sensible this is not fair, and reasonable: For you know, that there is no obligation to read every Chapter, from *Genesis* to the *Revelations*, in the *publick worship of God*; You know, that some Chapters, which are called *Canonical*,  
are



are such as may be improper, and unintelligible; such as are of very little concern to the *Christian* People; wholly out of their reach; of little advantage, either to the informing their minds in any important matter, or to the raising their devotion; You know, that many of those *Apocryphal Lessons* are truly of more use, and more to the *edification* of the people, than any of those *chapters* which are omitted. And why then should this always be spoken of, as if the people were rob'd of the *Word of God*, and *fabulous Legends* were imposed upon them instead of it, to be the rule of their lives?

And, as for your imagination, that the people are led by this to think these *Apocryphal* Books of equal authority with the *Canonical Scriptures*; how poor an insinuation is this! when the *Church* hath declared, and gives authority to all *Ministers* to declare, that they are not. This is a truth you may as effectually convince the people of, in the *Church of England*, as you can do by separating from it. I mean, if they will hear Reason; and if they will not, it is no matter what they believe, or what they disbelieve. But that any one of them was ever led by the

the Order about reading the *Lessons*, to think that *these* Books were of equal *Authority* with the *Canonical* Books, is what, I dare say, You cannot prove. I am sure, I never knew or heard of an instance. And till I do, I shall hardly think it so likely to come to pass as you represent it. But I proceed.

4. You cannot consent to the *mistranslation* of the *Psalter*: and therefore cannot conform as *Ministers*. The instance you produce is *Psal.* 105. 28. *And they were not obedient unto his word*; where the translation in our Bible reads, *and they rebelled not against his word*. Now, *First*, How can you assent, that they rebelled, and rebelled not? I answer, 1. Supposing these two propositions speak of the *same* persons (which you take for granted) I desire to know where you are required to assent that *they rebelled not*? to assent either to the *truth*, or to the *use* of that sentence? Your *Assent* can extend no farther than to what is appointed by the *Common-Prayer Book* in the publick service: and I know not, that the *translation* of the *Psalms*, as it is in our *Bibles*, hath any part in it. And, 2. Supposing the *subjects* of these two propositions to be different.

rent (as indeed they are) were your *Assent* to be extended to both, it might be given most readily and safely. For, cannot I *assent* that the *Egyptians* rebelled, and that *Moses*, and *Aaron*, rebelled not? But, *Secondly*, How can you *subscribe* that there is nothing in our service *contrary to the word of God*, when *this* is? I answer,

1. You here take our English *Translation* of the *Bible* to be the *word of God*; which I think it cannot assume to it self any farther than with respect to the main and substantial parts of it. The same may be said of all *Translations*. Nay, it doth not appear that any *Copy*, either of the *Old*, or *New Testament*, preserv'd to us in the *Original languages* in which they were written, hath been so much the care of *Providence* in those parts of it which are of no great or general concern, as that we can certainly say, This is the true reading, and the *Copies* that differ from this in these points, are not to be regarded. The great ends of *Revelation* may all be served without this miraculous *Providence*: and, as they may, so we find they have been.
2. In many such places as this, you cannot say the *Hebrew* must necessarily be interpreted *thus* and no otherwise; when  
you



you consider how the most Learned *Commentators* and *Interpreters* have differed. And tho' the *translation* of our *Psalter* be granted, in this place, to be more conformed to the *Septuagint*, than to the *Hebrew*, as we now have it; yet, pray, from what did the *Septuagint* translate? and to what did they conform their *translation*? Can you certainly demonstrate that our *Hebrew* Copy is more uncorrupted than theirs in such passages as this? But, 3. Supposing you were fully persuaded that the *Hebrew* ought to be *translated* here; *And they rebelled not against his word*; of whom do you understand this? Of *Moses* and *Aaron*, say the best *Commentatours*, who render it thus. The *Septuagint* translate it, *And they were not obedient unto his word*. Of whom do they understand it? Of *Moses* and *Aaron*? No, but of the *Egyptians*. Now how, I pray, do these two sentences contradict one another, *Moses and Aaron rebelled not*, and, *The Egyptians rebelled*? If you but look into the *Synopsis* of *Commentatours*, you will find that all who render it the former way, understand it either of *Moses* and *Aaron*; or of the *signs* and *prodigies*: and that all who render it the latter way, understand it of

the *Egyptians*. Where then is this contradiction? To conclude this Head. The declaration of *Assent* and *Consent* toucheth this *Translation* no farther than to oblige you to use it in the *publick Worship*. And if a *Translation*, tho' it be faulty, may not be used in our *Churches*; shew us a *Translation* that is perfect; or one that hath not greater failings than this you have produced. *Subscription* obligeth you to say that there is nothing in this *Translation* contrary to the *Word of God*: and there are so many things required to the proving a *Translation* contrary to the *Word of God* in such points as this, that I may say, it is almost impossible to do it.

5. You cannot *Assent* and *Consent* to the *Athanasian Creed*: and, therefore, cannot conform as *Ministers*. The expression you scruple is this, *Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly*. Here you give me leave to say, that You esteem this *Creed* an excellent explication of the *Doctrine of the Trinity*. By which you mean, to be sure, agreeable to the *Word of God*, and to *Truth*. From whence I argue; If this explication be true, and agreeable to the *Word of God*; then it is a good general proposition,

tion, that *whosoever doth not believe it, shall be condemned at the last day*: which is only the same thing in other words. Now, when we express our selves thus, We do not mean to condemn those who have not plain and certain means of coming to the knowledge of this; but only such who have the means of coming to it, and yet, through some fault in themselves, refuse to believe it. And you yourselves, I doubt not, understand such general propositions in *Scripture* with this restriction. You would assent to this proposition, *Whosoever believeth not in Christ, shall be condemned*; and yet not look upon your selves as so far call'd to judge other men, as to conclude all certainly damned for ever who did not believe in him; but such as had means and opportunity, and yet did not. Make the same allowance for this proposition which refers to an *excellent explication* of what you acknowledge to be a great and weighty truth, recommended to us in *Scripture*; and be not unwilling to find out as sound a sense for *this*, as you do for others: which if I thought you could not do *without renouncing your candour and charity*, I would never urge you to it. But though I cannot but wonder to find you al-



ways so very ready to pitch upon the worst interpretation of every sentence in our Service; and am fully persuaded there is nothing in *this* but what may be said with a good conscience; yet, I confess, I agree with you thus far, that I cannot apprehend how the *publick Service* would suffer, were there no such *damnatory sentence* ever read in it. Nay, I am of opinion that the *Doctrine of the Trinity* would be better secured, and this very account of it better received, *without* such sentences, than *with* them.

6. *You must Assent and Consent to this Rubric*, that none shall be admitted to the *Holy Communion*, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed; *which you cannot do*; and so cannot *conform* as *Ministers*. A great grievance indeed! that all who are to be admitted to the *Communion*, should be obliged solemnly, before the *Bishop*, *to own their Baptismal Covenant*; and to have his Prayers, and the Prayers of the Congregation for them! Who would have thought this could ever have been scrupled by any serious *Christian*? But what cannot *weakness* and *prejudice* lead men to? If this *confirmation* be not commonly managed

ged with a becoming Gravity and seriousness, as you insinuate, it is the fault of the Bishop who officiates; for I am sure it may be managed most gravely and seriously, because I know it hath often been so managed, and with great and visible advantage to many, And, what is there in it that a Christian ought not to comply with? And why must this be called a *Diocesan ceremony*, when an essential part of it is the most solemn profession of Christianity, to be made by the Persons to be confirmed? Besides, I have shewn before that you could have joined in imposing some things upon the people, which would have excluded many scrupulous persons from Communion; and, therefore, this cannot be an argument to you against conforming as Ministers.

Thus have I gone over all your reasons against the second thing required of Ministers in the Church of England, which you think unreasonable, viz. Assent and Consent, and Subscription: and have remarked, under every Head, whatever appeared convincing to my self, or apt to satisfy You. I must proceed now to the Third.

III. The Third thing required of Ministers in the Church of England, which you think unreasonable, is, To take the Oath

## The Reasonableness

of Canonical Obedience; and swear subjection to their Ordinary according to the Canons of the Church. This you cannot do, and, therefore cannot conform as Ministers. Here I must observe to You, that you are guilty of *two mistakes* in the very drawing up of this Article. 1. You here insert these words, *according to the Canons of the Church*: for in that *form of words* to which the Persons to be ordained are to answer, in order to declare they will obey their Ordinary and their Superiours, there is no mention of the *Canons of this Church*; but the words are, *following with a glad mind, and will, their godly admonitions, and submitting your selves to their godly judgments*. And it is a little hard indeed that such a *form* of words as this cannot please you. How can you say, that *this* is obliging your selves to an *absolute Obedience* to them; or, that this *declaration* doth not leave you so much as a *judgment of discretion*, when the words do not import any thing like it? when they would have been just the same, had there not been one *Canon* settled in this Church; and would certainly have been very different from what they are, if an *unrestrained, and unlimited obedience* had been thought of by those

who



who put them into this Form? And, 2. You speak as if no one could be *Ordained* in the *Church of England*, without taking the *Oath* of *Canonical* Obedience: which is not true; for this *Oath* is not to be found in the *Ordination-Office*: and therefore I must observe to you, that though I had invincible scruples against this particular *Oath*, yet, if I thought my self under a necessity of ministering in some Church or other, I would rather *minister* in *this Church* as far as I could without taking it, than divide the *Communion* of *Christians* on this account. I say not this because I think it in the least unreasonable to require all *Ministers* to take this *Oath* (in the true sense of the words) to the *Bishop* of the *Diocese* in which their *charge* lies; or because I think your *arguments* against it unanswerable: for I shall now endeavour to shew that it is not unreasonable, and that your *arguments* against it do not prove it so.

In order to this, let us enquire freely, and without prejudice, into the true meaning, and intent of this *Oath*. A person coming to settle in the *Diocese* of one particular *Bishop*; to exercise his Office under his eye and inspection; is obliged to

to declare upon *Oath*, that he will pay obedience to him in these words, *I swear, that I will yield True and Canonical Obedience to the Bishop of N ---- and his Successors, in all lawful and honest things*: which I think cannot be interpreted any otherwise than thus; *I swear that I will yield such an obedience as is due*, according to the Laws of Christ's Church, *from an inferior Presbyter to his Bishop, viz. a sincere, ready, and submissive Obedience, in all lawful and honest things, i. e. provided He enjoin nothing, but what I apprehend in my conscience to be lawful and honest*. Here it is plain from the *reason* of requiring this *Oath*, that it refers, and can refer to nothing but what this one *Bishop* shall see fit to require. It is plain that the last words, *in all lawful and honest things*, refer to all the *injunctions* of this *Bishop*; and do suppose that every *injunction* He lays upon you may possibly be *unlawful*, and *dishonest*. If you say they do not, how do you prove it? I am sure it is impossible. If they do, then they refer as well to his *injunctions* in *Cases* which the *Canons* reach to, as to *Cases* which they reach not to: and this being so, this *Oath* hinders not in the least,

least, but that you may demur upon the one sort of *injunctions*, as well as upon the other. And that you your self are judge of the *lawfulness* and *honesty* of every *command* is so plain, that nothing can be plainer. For what can these last words signify unless you be? and if *you* be not, I pray, *who* is? not the *Bishop*, it is plain; for the *Oath* supposes that every thing He commands may be *unlawful*. So that this appears to be the *Case*. Here is an *Oath* of *Obedience* to one particular *Bishop*, as long as you remain in his *Diocese*: here is no reference to any thing but the *injunctions* of this particular *Bishop*: here is no distinction made between his *injunctions* according to the *Canons*, and others; but all included: and this obedience not left unrestrained and loose, (as it is in other *Oaths* which yet you do not scruple) but determined only to things which you your selves *think lawful and honest*. From whence I think these two things are plain. That this *Oath* can have no reference to the *Canons*, or any of them, but as they are matter of this particular *Bishop's* *injunctions*: and that, when they are the matter of any of his *injunctions*, You have a liberty to demur upon them

as



as well as any other of his *injunctions*, any thing in this *Oath* notwithstanding. For they are not the *commands* of this *Bishop*, till he hath commanded the observation of them: and when he hath, still the *Oath* it self supposes that it is possible, every one of his *commands* may be *unlawful*. One thing more I add, and that is, that this *Oath* can refer to none but *future commands*; because it is to be taken with relation only to *one* particular person who never had any right to your obedience till this time. You come now under his Jurisdiction and Government: and from this time he is to give you directions in the execution of your *Office*, and lay *injunctions* upon you, as *occasion* requires; and upon this account only is this *Oath* administred to you. And if you would consider things in their due light, you must acknowledge, that it is expressed in words which give as much latitude, and as much liberty to them who take it, as the most conscientious persons upon earth could desire: Nay, I would gladly know in what words you would rather chuse to promise obedience to your *Bishop*; and what *Form* you can devise, that could imply *Absolute Obedience* less than this doth.

doth. But I now come to your *Objections* against it.

And here I do not find, that you attempt to prove that the words of the *Oath* do plainly signifie an *absolute Obedience to every one of the Canons* not abrogated by some *Publick Act*; or that any *Publick Act* of the *Church* declares, that *Ministers* are understood by this *Oath* to swear obedience to all *Canons* not so abrogated: though somewhat like this one might justly expect. Nor do I find that you judge thus of this *Oath* from the word *Canonical* inserted in it: for you say the same of that *promise of Obedience to the Ordinary* required of persons to be *Ordained*, in which no such word is made use of. What then are the *Reasons* why this *Oath* is not to be complied with?

1. The *First* is this; because *as all Obedience hath a relation to the Mandates of those we are to obey: so the Canons of the Church are the stated Laws of the Ecclesiastical Government: and therefore the Oath of Canonical Obedience which hath a reference to these Canons, carries in it a plain Obligation to comply with them, without leaving persons at liberty which to obey,*  
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*and which to refuse, &c.* I have shewn before that this *Oath* cannot possibly refer to the *Canons*, but as they become the *injunctions* of one particular *Bishop*: and that it not only permits, but obliges all *Ministers*, in effect, to refuse obedience to any of his *injunctions*, when they appear not to them to be *lawful and honest*. When I swear obedience to one particular Person (as the *Case* is here) this *obedience* hath no relation to the *injunctions* of any Persons in the world except this one: and when I swear *Obedience* to him only in things *lawful and honest*, I oblige my self to obedience in nothing but what is to me *lawful and honest*. Neither the *Canons* of the *Church*, nor any things *antecedently required* have the least relation to this *Oath*. Nor is the question here, whether the *Canons* be without fault; but whether you will obey this particular *Bishop*, in all *lawful and honest things*.

Let me put a *Case* now which appears to me to be exactly parallel; and which may serve to explain yet more fully the point now before us. Supposing you were now coming into this *City*, to act in some *Inferiour Office* under the Inspection



pection of the *Lord Mayor*, (who is one of the *Chief-Officers* under his *Prince*, as the *Bishop* is under *Jesus Christ*) in the execution of which *Office* you might often have occasion to consult him, and he often find occasion to send his *Directions* and *Injunctions* to you. Supposing you were obliged upon your coming under his Jurisdiction, and within the Bounds of his Government, to take this Oath, *I swear that I will yield true and legal Obedience to the Lord-Mayor &c. in all lawful and honest things*, I desire to know, 1. Whether this *Oath* can have a reference to all the *Stated Laws* by which the *Lord-Mayor* is to govern, any farther than as they are the matter of his *Commands* to you? Or, whether it can possibly refer to any thing but *this particular Governour's future Commands*? considering that the only Reason why you are called upon to take it is, because you are now coming to act under his eye, and in an *Inferiour Office*, in which you are often to have *Directions* from him? 2. Whether a *Legal Obedience* to the *Lord-Mayor* can signify any thing in this *Oath*, but such a sincere, honest, submissive Obedience as the *Laws* require of an *Inferiour Officer*

Officer to his *Superiour*, under whose Inspection he is to act? considering that the word *Legal* is join'd with *Obedience*, as the word *True* is, to explain what sort of *Obedience* is expected: and as for the *Extent* of this *Obedience*, there are other words purposely added to restrain it to *lawful*, and *honest*, things only.

3. Whether you might not, any thing in this *Oath* notwithstanding, refuse *Obedience* to any *Commands* of the *Lord-Mayor* that you apprehend to be *unlawful*, without enquiring whether these *Commands* be according to the *Laws of the Land*, or no? considering that this *Oath* relates to nothing but the *injunctions* of this *Governour*. 4. Whether you might not honestly take this *Oath*, without so much as knowing what *Laws* the *Lord-Mayor* himself is oblig'd to act by; or what *injunctions*, it is probable, he will lay upon you; only resolving to yield *Obedience* to him, in all *lawful* and *honest* things? considering that the *Occasion* of this *Oath*, and the *Words* of it restrain this *Obedience* to the *Directions* of this particular *Governour*; and that it is time enough for you to judge of the *lawfulness* of them, when they are signified to you.

5. Whe-

5. Whether the last words of the *Oath* do not plainly signifie, that you your self are left sole judge of the *lawfulness* and *honesty* of the *Commands*, and of *all* as well as *some* of them? considering that there is no distinction either made or implied in the *Oath*; that these last words can signifie nothing, and are but a *nonsensical Addition*, if you suppose that you oblige your self by this *Oath* blindly to obey any of the *Commands* of your Superiour without *leaving your self so much as a judgment of Discretion*, whether they be lawful or not.

Now, if you apply what I have said, to the *Case* before us; and be but as willing to put a true interpretation upon the *Oath* of *Canonical Obedience* to the *Bishop*, as I believe you would be to put a true interpretation upon such an *Oath* to the *Lord-Mayor*, I am perswaded not a word more is necessary. But I cannot help declaring, what I constantly find hitherto to be true, that you are more willing to make *Nonsense*, *Absurdity*, and *Contradiction*, of any of those *Declarations*, or *Sentences*, upon which you found your *Objections*, than to allow them such a *Construction* as will make them appear less

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rigid.



## The Reasonableness

*rigid* than your *Fathers*, or you, have represented them: for fear (one would think) that the World should come at last to esteem *Ministerial Conformity* to the *Church of England* a very pardonable thing. If you blame me for being so free as to declare this, I can do nothing but appeal to this Chapter now before me for the proof of it. And I desire you would consider whether you give us not a just occasion of laying this to your charge in the *Case* now before us. Here is an *Oath* to be taken: and rather than it should not appear *Egregious Dissimulation* (as your words are) to take it, you do indeed put a sense upon it which neither the words, nor design, can admit of. For, to return to your *Objection*, nothing can be plainer, than that an Obedience to a *Governour*, restrain'd in express terms to *things lawful*, can have no relation to any thing but *things* accounted by you to be *lawful*; yet here we have it affirmed, that such an *Obedience* hath a relation to *all the Stated Laws* by which the *Governour* is to act, though you account them *unlawful*. Nothing can be plainer, than that this *Oath* supposes that all his Commands may be *unlawful*, and leaves you to judge of *all* as well

as *some*; yet here it is affirmed, that it leaves you not so much as a *judgment of Discretion*, as to *some* of them. Nothing is plainer than that the reason and design of this *Oath* restrains it to the *Future Commands of one particular Bishop*; yet we have it maintain'd, that it supposes an *Obligation to comply with the things antecedently required by others*. Where, I beseech you, is this supposed? What words are here in this *Oath* that *do plainly*, nay, that *can possibly*, refer to any thing *antecedently required*? Or, is this *supposed* in the *Reason* of the *Oath*? That, I am sure, is apparently against you. If neither in the *Reason*, nor the *Words* of it, where else can this *Obligation* be *supposed*? For my part, I am convinc'd that no *Arts*, or *Metaphysics*, in the world can be sufficient to make good this part of your charge. And indeed you seem to me to confute your own Accusation in this place. For after you have acknowledged that there is in the *Oath* a *Limitation* of this Obedience to things *lawful and honest*, you grant this *Limitation is to be extended only to Future Commands*. From whence I argue (and I recommend the Argument to your Consideration) that the *Oath* it self can

be extended to nothing but *Future Commands*. For, if these words, *all lawful and honest things*, refer to *Future Commands* only, as you say they do; then an *Obedience* promised in *all lawful and honest things* can refer to nothing but *Future Commands*. If the *Limitation* extend only to *Future Commands*; then the *Obedience* promised with this *Limitation* extends only to *Future Commands*. If there be any other *Obedience* sworn in these words, besides a *limited* one, let it be plainly shewn. If there be not, let it be acknowledged, that a *Limited Obedience*, can refer to nothing, but what the *Limitation* refers to. What might have been expected, if such a *Limitation* had not been added; when, now it is added in plain words, the *Obedience* promised with a *Limitation*, is made to extend to *Injunctions* to which the *Limitation* it self is acknowledged not to extend? Nay, besides all this, supposing this *Oath* to refer to *Obedience to the Canons* already settled; can you possibly invent a better Argument to prove that an *absolute Obedience* to every one of them not abrogated is promised in it, than the last words will afford us that it is not? All you can say is, that *surely whatever*  
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*the Church Representative requires cannot be supposed unlawful by those who profess so great a Reverence for all its dictates as some do, which is rather banter than argument: but we can produce the very words of the Oath supposing that every one of them may be scrupled by you unless you your self judge them lawful and honest: and we are not now enquiring what I, or any other private person, think; but what this Oath supposes, or implies.*

Now, if the account of this *Oath* which I have now laid down, be a true one, as I verily believe it is; it is plain that all your objections drawn from the *Canons*, let the obedience to them be never so much *antecedently* required, are no more *objections* against the taking this *Oath* than they are against taking the *Oath* of *Allegiance*. And, therefore, I need not trouble you, or my self, with any thing particular in defence of every *Canon* you object against; tho', I assure you, I could shew that you put most unreasonable interpretations upon many of them; and represent their sense very unfairly; and argue unjustly against them. If I have proved that this *Oath* cannot refer to any *absolute Obedience* to them, I have done

what is sufficient to remove this *Reason* against your *conforming* as *Ministers*. From what hath been said it appears also, that the *Case* of a *Minister*, in this matter, is not the same with that of a *Justice of Peace*, as you represent it to be ; unless the *Oath* a *Justice* takes, be an *Oath* of *Obedience* to the *Future Commands* of one particular person, under whose inspection He is to execute his *Office* : and unless the *Obedience* be limited to *lawful and honest things* ; and a liberty left him of demurring upon the *Commands* of his *Superiours*. But supposing this *Oath* of a *Minister* had been expressed after the same manner with that of a *Justice of Peace* ; do you really think that a *Justice* binds himself to execute every particular *Law* of the *Land* not publicly abrogated when called to it ? Do you think that a *Gentleman* might not honestly take upon him that *Office*, tho' he did not so much as know all the *Laws* He might possibly be called, one time or other, to execute ; nay, tho' there were *Laws*, not abrogated, which He was resolved never to execute ; provided they were such as His *Prince* neither at present requires Him, nor would, in all probability, require Him to execute during his whole

whole life? such as were grown to be universally disused, and that disuse constantly connived at? This would be no very grateful lesson to many of your own Friends, or indeed to any *Justice* in the whole Land. But I do not believe you think hardly of any such *Gentlemen*; and yet none of their *Superiours* would let them openly explain their meaning, and say, *These Laws I will execute, and these I will not.* They certainly act sincerely and honestly, in taking such an *Oath*, if they satisfy their consciences as to those *Laws* which they themselves may probably, in the present state of things, be called and required to execute. Now, I say, supposing this *Oath* of *Ministers* to be parallel to that of *Justices*, You are obliged either to shew that a *Justice* binds himself to the execution of every particular *Law* not abrogated (which you cannot do) or to make the same allowances for *Ministers* as you can do, upon occasion, for others; and not to think harder of them than you usually do of others. But,

2. *Another Capital Reason* (as you term it) why this *Oath* is scrupled is, because the *Episcopal Government* is managed by *Chancellour's Courts*, where *Laymen* excommunicate,



*municate, and absolve, &c.* I need only mention this. For I have before shewn that there is nothing promised in this *Oath* but an *Obedience* to the *Future Commands* of one particular Governour, limited only to such things as you your self judge to be *lawful*: and therefore need not go over all your sad and unjust aggravations of this. Employ all your art and Rhetorick to make this as foul as you would have it appear; Call it by what names you please; I see not how it touches the matter before us; for, Let the Case be never so bad, and your representation of it never so true; (which indeed it is not) this *Oath* obligeth you to no *obedience* but what you your self shall think *lawful*. It binds you not to *act blindfold*; or to *overthrow the Pastoral office*; or to *approve of sacrilegious prophaneſs*; or to *trust your consciences with Lay-men*; or to be the *instruments of molesting, worrying, and ruining as Religious Persons as any in your Parishes*; but only to *obey your Bishop in all lawful things*. Look over these passages again; and see with what Conscience you can thus represent either this *Oath*, or the promise of *Obedience* to the *Ordinary*; both of which can relate to nothing but the *Future Commands*

*mands* of some particular Men, and are drawn up with such a *limitation* plainly expressed, as you are forced to *understand* in almost every other *Oath* you take. I do not deny that it is *possible* you may suffer some Inconvenience for *refusing Obedience* in some cases. But it is but *possible*; and I do not think you can produce any Instances of *Ministers* who have suffered any thing considerable for it. But this is not the Point, what *possible Inconveniences* a *Minister* is liable to: but what *Obedience* he obligeth himself to, by the *Oath* we are now considering: and to say that he obligeth himself to any *blindfold acting*, is to say what is directly contrary to the *Words* and *Design* of it. I shall only now set down the *Oath* before the *Reader's* face, and with it the *Two* Interpretations; that which *You* have fixed upon it; and that which I apprehend to be the only one of which it is capable; that so he may the more easily judge between us. The *Oath* is this, *I swear that I will yield true and Canonical obedience to the Bishop of N. in all lawful and honest things.* Your Interpretation of it is this, *I swear that I will obey every one of the Canons, (not publicly abrogated) as being antecedently obliging,*

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*obliging; and supposed to contain nothing but what is lawful and honest: and also that I will obey the future Commands of this Bishop in all lawful, and honest things.* In which you are forced to make the *Oath* consist of two Parts, to one of which you apply the last words; and to the other you do not: in *one* of which you promise a *limited Obedience* to the Commands of the *Bishop*; in the other an *absolute Obedience* to something else: whereas the last words do manifestly restrain *all* the *Obedience* promised: and the *Oath* refers to nothing but the *Commands* of one Person. The Interpretation I apprehend to be the true one, and that of which alone it is capable, is this; *I, now coming to act under the eye and inspection of this particular Bishop, do swear, that I will yield a true Obedience to Him, and such a sincere, ready, and submissive Obedience as, by the Laws of the Church, is required of a Presbyter to his Bishop, in all things that, according to the best light I have, I can apprehend to be lawful and honest.* This is the *Oath*, and these are the *Two Interpretations*; and let any one in the World judge, which is most agreeable to the Design and Words of it. From  
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what I have said on this Head, give me leave to Conclude, that it is so far from being *Egregious Dissimulation to take this Oath with a Reserve to demur upon the Commands* afterwards given, let them be what they will; that you cannot possibly take this *Oath* in the plain sense of the words in which it is framed, *without this reserve*, unless you make two *Oaths* of it, and make a *distinction* out of your own Heads inconsistent with the words of it. But I have done. Only I desire it may be observed, that for all these long and tragical Exclamations upon this *Oath* to the *Bishop*, and *Promise* of *Obedience* to the *Ordinary*, we have only Mr. *Baxter*, and one of his last Books quoted; though for the other Heads of Accusation many others are added. Not that I think that what is here said is ever the more to be rejected on this Account, if it appear reasonable; but yet, this is a prejudice against it, and a presumption that the matter may be mistaken, and his terrible *Invective* misapplied.

But you will say, What then? Is no *Obedience* due from a *Minister* to the *Canons*? Yes, certainly; but not by this *Oath*,

*Oath*, unless as they become the *Commands* of his *Bishop*; nor then, any *absolute Obedience*. Not by this *Oath*, I say; and that is what we are now considering. But I add, that whoever designs to officiate as a *Minister* in any *Church*, certainly acts not fairly and honestly, if he do not first satisfy his Conscience about the lawfulness of Obedience to such Rules and Prescriptions as have been laid down and agreed upon by the *Governours* of this *Church*, for the regulating the Behaviour of all who minister in it; and resolve to obey them. But then the *Rules* and *Prescriptions* he is to satisfy himself about can be only such as concern his own Behaviour and Conduct in his Office: And of these only such as he supposed by the present *Governours* of the *Church* to be obliged and ready to obey. For it is very plain, that I am concerned only in the *Present Time*; and obliged to *Obedience* to no *Rules* but those to which *Obedience* is *now* required; those which are *now* esteemed to be obligatory. Concerning the *Canons* therefore against which you object (those, I mean, which concern the Conduct of *Ministers*) I ask, Are they not such as are altered and repealed by any subsequent

quent Laws? Or, such as that Obedience to them at this time cannot be performed? Or, such as are generally disused, and that *disuse* not clandestine, but known, and connived at by all in Authority? If they be, they concern not the present *Ministers*; for *they* are obliged to obey no Law, Obedience to which is not at *present* required: and need not trouble themselves about any *Canons*, but what are at present esteemed to be obliging. If they be not, I grant that they are certainly *now* supposed to be in force; and every *Minister* supposed to be ready to comply with them, and obliged to do it. Now if you look into that Catalogue of *Canons* you have produced, and separate those of this latter sort from the others, I hope you will find upon the review, either that you are mistaken in the sense you have put upon them; or that I have in the foregoing Discourse proposed what is sufficient to prove it very lawful both for the *Ministers* to pay Obedience to them, and for their *Governours* to require it. But, however this be, I am sure it is not reasonable, nor justifiable, for Persons to *Conform* as *Ministers* to a *Church*, in which there are *Laws* laid down



down for their Behaviour in their *Office*; and these *Laws* neither abrogated, nor disused with connivence: to *Conform*, I say, as *Ministers* to such a Church, without a resolution of obeying these *Laws*. For this is not open and fair; it is putting a Deceit upon the *Governours*, who, to be sure, doubt not but that all who offer themselves to the *Ministry*, are satisfied in their Consciences of the lawfulness of acting according to these *Prescriptions*. And, it looks not sincere for Men first to offer themselves to the *Ministry* in this *Church*, which is in effect, to profess that they are ready to conform to such of the *Canons* as relate to their Behaviour, and are *now* in force; and afterwards to act as they think fit without regard to these *Canons*: *First*, to make a shew of obedience to these *laws*; and after this to act *clandestinely* till they are found out and censured; and then to think it enough to submit to the penalty, which they must do, whether they will or no. The *Law* was certainly made to be obeyed; and the *penalty* was not added to intimate that any might take their choice whether they would conform to the *law*, or submit to *that*; or as if it were an indifferent

rent thing to our *Governours* whether we chose to *obey*, or to *suffer*. It was added for the sake of men who have no consciences, not for the sake of those who have. This is what seemed to me proper and necessary to be said on this Occasion.

Thus have I finished one part of what I undertook; and have, with the utmost sincerity, and the greatest regard to truth, considered those *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* which you judge to be *Unreasonable*, and endeavoured to return such answers to the *objections* made in your names against them, as appeared truly convincing and satisfactory: which was the *First* thing I proposed. I promised in the *Second* place to shew that the arguments produced by Mr. *Calamy* in defence of your selves are not sufficient to justify your *separation*, even supposing these *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* to be *Unreasonable*; And, *Thirdly*, To consider what is advanced by *Him* for the vindication of your people. What I shall offer to you under these *two Heads* will be wholly distinct from what is said under the *First*; and the *arguments* to be proposed under *them*, of no relation to the *argument* founded upon *this*. So that, for this

this, and some other *reasons*, I shall beg leave to reserve them for *another part*; which I promise shall wait upon you with all convenient hast. In the mean while, permit me to leave this argument with you.

The *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* to the *Church of England* are such as may verily lawfully be complied with;

Therefore, supposing it necessary for you to *minister* in some *Church* or other, you ought to *conform* as *Ministers* to the *Church of England*.

This *consequence* you acknowledge, if the *former proposition* be true. And for the truth of *that*, I can only appeal to what I have said in the foregoing discourse: which I, therefore, intreat you to examine, not with the rigour of those, whose only business it is to think the worst of every thing they once disliked; but with such a *temper* of mind as becomes persons whose duty it is most willingly to admit of all reasonable Arguments that can be offered in defence of *Conformity* to the *Established Church*.

F I N I S.



